

Tides of Fate

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Tides of Fate

by [slashyrogue](#)

Summary

Will has been a prisoner aboard the ship of the formidable Pirate Chilton for several days when he's rescued by a man he thought dead for nearly a decade. Hannibal is cold and indifferent, nothing like the man he remembers. Why has Hannibal stayed away so long and what did Will do to make him leave?

Originally from tumblr.

Chapter 1

The ship swayed every second that Will tried to relax, growing worry over his surroundings making it harder than anything to even attempt such a feat.

There was noise above his head and he closed his eyes, remembering the screams of the men who had been attempting to take him to the Americas. He knew them a short time but they had been good men, their deaths had been in vain and that alone made Will push back memories of other deaths at sea he did not wish to think of.

Not now.

Before long Will succumbed to sleep, his exhaustion getting the better of him.

He awoke when he heard the screaming.

The fearsome Captain Chilton had seemed quite horrid and to think someone could overtake his ship was worrisome, he wondered what ship could have a more fearsome crew than the one he had already been captured by.

The door opened to the brig, Will looking up as the clip clop of boots filled the quiet prison and when he saw the face of the first man in front of him it took everything not to scream.

Hannibal.

There was no mistake, Will knew those eyes and that face anywhere and in every waking memory even now; though he hadn't dared to think of him as of late.

He looked amazing, fearsome and handsome all at the same time. Will struggled to stand as he heard, "Take him," the man behind Hannibal grabbing roughly onto his arms and dragging him away Will almost crying out from the pain of it. Hannibal ignored him completely and walked off, Will fighting for breath.

"Who are you?"

The man mumbled, "No one you need to know."

"That man, with the patch..."

"My Captain, you will see him soon enough," the man mumbled, pushing onto Will's back and when he felt the air on his face Will took a deep breath ignoring the overall stench of death and sea air.

"We found one," his companion said, Will opening his eyes to see a mess of people surrounding him with glaring looks.

A woman, brown haired and fair walked over and scanned him with her eyes seeming amused.

"You are?"

"Earl of Duke Hall, William Graham."

Her amusement seemed to grow at his declaration, “We have ourselves a fancy one,” she joked, grabbing his arm much more softly than the man before her, “I dunno if you’ll be able to fit in with our crew, though....”

“He will be off the ship as soon as we make port,” came Hannibal’s voice from behind him, Will turning again in hopes to see his face again and getting his cheek,

His heart ached in his chest for the dismissal.

What had he done wrong? Why would Hannibal have run away and why was he still?

“Yes, Captain.”

Will tried not to show his disappointment, watching Hannibal’s back as he made his way back over to the ship that was docked beside this one. He felt relieved to be rescued but it had seemed to only raise more questions.

“You okay, Fancy?”

He looked over at the woman, “My name is Will.”

She smiled, “Alana, but people call me Bloom. I’m sorry to say but Fancy suits you better.”

Will felt a smile tug at his mouth, looking away and nearly stumbling off of the short plank between the ships glad for Alana’s strength at keeping him upright.

“Thank you.”

“How long has it been since you were fed?”

Will did not remember.

“Too long.”

She led him across the deck of Hannibal’s ship, wondering just how long this had been his lost love’s life. Had Hannibal left his commission early? Why had he stayed away?

“Fancy?”

Will looked up and saw that he’d been led to a small room, containing but a chair and a bed the soft cushion beneath him a comfort. “I’m sorry, it’s been an eventful day.”

Alana smiled, “I would imagine, how’d you get in that mess anyway?”

Will shook his head, “It’s a long story, I just,” he looked at her plainly, “What can you tell me about your captain?”

He saw a strange twinkle in Alana’s eye. “Why?”

“We...”

She smiled. “...you know the captain.”

Will looked down, his sadness showing, “Yes, I...I did. A long time ago.”

Alana seemed to be waiting for an explanation and he wouldn't give it, not against Hannibal's wishes and certainly not to a stranger.

"I'll get you something to eat, you tell me something, then I'll tell you anything you'd like to know."

He looked up at that, his eyes widening, "I...I would like to know, I...he may not want me to, but I...please."

She smiled, putting a hand to his head like one would a pup. "I'm filled with information, Fancy. Don't you worry, I'll give you something before you have to go."

Will felt warmth in his heart at the promise, not ready to tell her yet that he was not going anywhere despite what Hannibal wanted. There was nothing left for him at home, not anymore, and now that he'd found the love of his life again there was nothing short of Hannibal himself carrying him off that would cause Will to leave this ship.

He lay back on the cot, his eyes closing involuntarily, relaxing and feeling safe for the first time in nearly four days.

The room smelled wet and dirty though still way above his last accommodations. Will could not remember ever feeling so tired in his life, succumbing again to his exhaustion only to wake to the sun and a dark haired woman sitting in the chair beside his bed, her eyes smiling. "Good morning, Fancy."

The nickname was catching on and he could not say it was in mocking. "Hello."

The woman held out her hand and he did not sit up, leaning over to grasp it. "Katz," she said, "You look like shit, Fancy."

He laughed, lifting his neck back and feeling tears in his eyes. "I feel the same, I...it was a long time in that cell."

"You hungry?"

Will turned, sitting up with a wince and nodding, "Yes, desperately."

Katz held out her hand and he grabbed hold, the two of them heading for the door as he felt the air on his face again. The ship was still moving, still swaying, but it didn't feel as sinister at that of Chilton's.

"The ship is sturdier than the last I was on."

"Captain makes sure of that, and he," she squeezed his shoulder, "He takes care of his own. Though I heard you know that already."

Will turned, reddening, "Alana speaks out of turn."

"My Bloom does that, doesn't she?"

Will looked at her with a smile, "You are lovers."

"For a long while," she smiled, "You ready to tell your story yet, Fancy?"

Will said, "My name is Will."

"Not anymore," she led him across the same deck he'd walked across last night, the eyes of the crew now friendlier than he remembered, "Guys, look who's awake!"

Several people came up to him, hands patting Will's shoulders and he felt on display, shrinking into himself just as he heard, "ENOUGH!" making the crew around him scramble to take off into different directions.

He saw Alana walking over with a plate, filled with food Will knew nothing of but grabbed anyway eating so fast he felt sick for it. Coughing, he felt a hand on his back and looked up at twin pairs of eyes staring at him with worry. "Slow down, there will be more."

"Hannibal," he breathed, wiping his mouth, "I need to see him."

Alana looked down, "The Captain is busy, he will see you off when you go."

Will felt bitter tears in his eyes, "He will not see me?"

"He is very busy, Fancy, he..."

Will pushed past her and headed towards the door she came out of, ignoring the arm on his threadbare shirt and Katz's call of, "Will, stop!" until he saw someone come out of the door in front of him.

"Mischa."

It was she, he knew that, looking so much older and less friendly than he remembered. Eighteen now, no doubt, he nearly ran for her though the dark glare he got in return only confused him more.

"Earl," she hissed, "You look dirty still, have they not cleaned you?"

Will paused, breathless and hurt at lack of warmth in her eyes. "No, I...no."

She smirked, her brother's twin in that, and then said, "I am sure we can find a tub somewhere. Katz!"

Will was dismissed again, ignored, the youngest Lecter treating him like a stranger though to her he probably was. He had not seen her since Hannibal's funeral, the bitter tears on her eight-year-old cheeks a sudden vivid memory though the hug he'd received in return was not going to repeat itself he wagered.

He turned, following her pant and boot covered legs as she ordered a tub for him. Katz came over and said, "C'mon."

Will went without thought, feeling that horrible ache again and not understanding what made both Hannibal and Mischa treat him with such ire.

The room he was led to was off from the small bunking area that he assumed the others slept in, a metal washtub that seemed to be recently filled. He nodded once, waiting for her to leave and getting increasingly uncomfortable when she did not. "I would appreciate some privacy."

Katz frowned, "No story, yet?"

“I do not know you very well Katz,” he sighed, “I...”

“Beverly,” she offered, “My friends call me Beverly.”

Will smiled, stripping off his shirt as he offered, “I thought Hannibal was dead in the ground the last I saw of him, it was a shock to see him alive in front of me again. I am unsure of why Mischa would be angry with me.”

Beverly nodded, turning away once and saying over her shoulder, “I’m sure it will all work out, Fancy, don’t worry.”

When she was gone he stripped, getting into the washtub and surprised to see such fine tools beside him for a proper cleansing. He was deep into his routine when he felt eyes upon him and looked up, seeing nothing but shadow and wishing for some covering to be sure.

The feeling was there again, unbidden and disconcerting, but he did not look up instead hurrying as he bathed and wondering if this was all futile.

He would bathe and then change into dirty clothes?

As he finished the door opened again, startling and then relaxing him at the sight of Alana carrying what seemed to be a fine set of clothes. She set them down beside him, “All right?”

Will nodded, “I,” he took a breath, “I do not intend to leave.”

Alana’s smile was wide. “I see.”

Will felt overwhelming relief that she was not angry or against him. “I would like to see Hannibal, please. I know he does not want to see me.”

She handed him a towel, Will taking and covering himself as she looked away. “I will take you wherever you wish to go, Fancy.”

Chapter 2

Hannibal sat across the vast table in front of him, his hands tight on the edge of it as he fought every fiber of his being not to go back to Will again.

He was a monster, and a fool for his own weakness.

Sneaking a glance at someone who belonged to another was uncouth, desperate and rakish to the extreme even for someone who had cut the flesh of his enemies to consume them completely.

Hannibal recalled the sight of the washcloth going down Will's bare arm, the droplets of water making him wish to be the one helping bathe such beautiful skin again and remembering the touch of it like only yesterday.

His beloved's sighs and moans were a long suppressed memory that suddenly he no longer could feign having forgotten.

He sighed, head in his palms when the doors to his quarters came open with a bang and his little sister stomped into the room. "When will he be gone?"

Hannibal looked down, refusing to let her see him upset. "Soon. The first sign of shore and he will be taken there."

Mischa sat down at his left and he watched the emotions play across her face, lip out in childish anger unbecoming a woman of her age. "I still remember your grief."

"Mazasis," he sighed, "I..."

Mischa grabbed his hand and squeezed it, "You were a fool then and a fool now, brother, but I love you just the same. I...I do not wish to see this pain befall you again after what it took to get over it."

Hannibal squeezed back and nodded, kissing her knuckle as he promised, "It will not, but it is not Will's doing."

She let go of his hand and frowned, "I know. You're a fool."

He watched her go and the door close loudly after, feeling like someone had filled him with lead to sink to the bottom of the ocean floor.

There was a knock and he could barely let out a noise until Alana was inside.

"He will not leave," she closed the door to his room, leaning against it, "Your Will."

Hannibal's jaw tensed as he looked away, "He is not my anything, if he will not leave then throw him over the edge and be done with it."

He could clearly hear her boots as she came closer, leaning over the table and the amusement in her voice made Hannibal want to throw his sword into her chest.

"If you want him gone that badly, do it yourself. The others are quite taken with him."

Hannibal looked up with a growl, “He is not welcome here.”

“I beg to differ,” she grinned, hopping up on the table and crossing her legs, “I think I’d love to regale your Will more about your last ten years. He’s eaten up all knowledge of you already, the stars in his eyes at your name are quite amusing.”

Hannibal grabbed for her but she was too fast, hopping off the table and walking behind his chair, “Do not speak to him of such things, he does not need to know them and...”

The door behind them opens with a clang, Alana’s hand coming to rest at the back of his chair, “Oh, did I not mention he was waiting outside?”

Hannibal stared at Will, his Will, a man now in every sense of the word. The righteous anger in his eyes made him ache to relieve it, but the words that come out only frightened him into wondering how long he’ll be able to keep up this charade.

“Where have you been?”

Alana walked around the table, patting his shoulder as she left them alone and the door shutting shook him out of his reverie. “Living, the same as you.” Will stepped forward and he put up his hand, “Stop.”

“Mylimasis,” Will breathes, the word a dagger in him so deep that he hissed.

“DO NOT USE THAT WORD WITH ME,” the way his voice shook seemed to frighten Will who took a step back.

“Hannibal, I...”

“You will be on the first boat to shore as soon as we see land, do I make myself clear?”

Will’s mouth is a thin line, his clothes did not fit him and there was still dirt in spots across his face. Hannibal had never seen anyone look so perfect.

“Perfectly,” Will whispered and turned to with leave his hand on the door as he said, “I thought you dead.”

“Consider me still,” is the only answer he can give, his eyes closing when the door slammed shut on their past right behind Will.

He felt the grief again like a gutting, the pain making his eyes water at the loss even as he knows this is for Will’s own good.

Everything he’s done at his point has been for Will’s own good and would continue to be.

Standing is a chore, his legs shake but work correctly after the first two times and the walk to the window of his room is a long one. Phantom hands came around him and he closed his eyes, remembering fevered kisses and whispered promises of young boys who knew not what the future could hold.

“Oh how I’ve missed you,” his whisper is hoarse, broken, and he hated himself for the weakness.

The door opened again and the soft steps could only belong to one person, Hannibal allowing Mischa to comfort him again even as she whispered, "Fool. He is no longer wed."

"Do you know this? For certain?"

Mischa frowned, "He does not wear a ring, and the crew asked after his family he said he did not have one. Hannibal, if he is not then you..."

Hannibal shook his head, "Even if that were true, mazasis, that was never the obstacle, as you well know."

Mischa let him go and seemed to pace, Hannibal feeling again the fool for needing her more than she needed him. "If you wish to deny yourself and Will this, I cannot stop you."

"Mischa..."

He turned to see her face covered in tears, "He used to be so special to me, I...Brolis."

"He can be still, little one. I will not stop you."

Mischa nodded, her face crumbling as he stared longer and when he saw her turn to go it was easier to admit to her, "He only got more handsome, did he not?"

Mischa scoffed, "Hannibal, you are such a fool. So much time has passed since then, so many changes between you both and you are not the man you used to be. You..."

"Please. Do not."

She left in another angry scoff, leaving him again and when he settled in for the evening that night it was a sleepless one only to wake up to joyful shouting from above.

He dressed in a hurry, groggy and annoyed at the morning noise. The steps up to the deck seemed vast and unending as he made his way, stopping to stare as he caught sight of his sister dancing a practiced waltz with the man who he once had thought to ask to be his husband.

The sight brought back fond memories, a little Mischa learning to waltz on Will's toes as Hannibal played the harpsichord for them. He leaned against the deck, smile coming without his permission and when Will caught sight of him the smile he got in return only made it worse.

Will was a vision, even more perfect than he'd ever remembered.

He frowned, stomping once. "Are we not supposed to be working?" he growled, "I was unaware that things changed when we are transporting strangers to shore."

Hannibal could feel Will's eyes burning into his face but did not look his way, instead heading up to the wheel. The feel of the wind in his face was welcome, grabbing the wheel from Francis who seemed to notice his upset but didn't comment, as he should not.

The captain should never be questioned.

"A fine day," he sighed.

"We have yet to see land, Captain."

Hannibal frowned, "We will, make no mistake."

Francis nodded once and left him to solitude, though not for long.

"You did not have to ruin the fun of everyone just because you hate the sight of me," Will declared, the anger in his voice welcome, "I promise not to upset the routine in the future, Ha...Captain."

Hannibal did not look at him, "They should be doing their duty and know better, you are not used to such things."

"You do not know what I am used to," Will hissed, "It has been a decade since we last saw each other."

Hannibal turned and saw just how angry he was, his eyes were burning with it and to his shame the sight only made Will more desirable. "Yes, it has," he mocked, "Have you been sailing around on a pirate ship in your spare time between balls and planning your family?"

Will stepped back, surprised, "You...how do you know about Molly?"

Hannibal turned away, "Your father made sure it was well known. His son the Earl marrying the Queen's cousin. Good match, a perfect pairing that will wield a multitude of babes with curls."

Will was quiet, "My wife and child died nearly a year ago," he confessed, making Hannibal face him in shock, "I do not plan on another of either."

The sorrow in his love's eyes was nearly enough to make Hannibal give in to his need to comfort Will, stepping towards him once but stopping. "I apologize for my error."

Will turned and said nothing as he left, making Hannibal feel even more foolish than before. He had been filled with anger at hearing the news that Will married, hating the image he conjured of a fair haired beauty who was no doubt his beloved's equal in every way. Now Will was alone again, though the differences between them were now even vaster than before.

"LAND HO!" Hannibal heard a shout that was no doubt from Brown, the insufferable peacock who always put on a show for someone new.

He turned to see Will laughing with the man in question, Brown's hand on Will's shoulder as he pointed out the shore. His hand tightened on the wheel as he headed towards it and knew they would be there by dusk at best.

The feeling that Will would soon be out of his life caused him more pain than their earlier confrontation, Hannibal swallowing hard as he let out a breath.

This was as it should be. Come hell or high water, Will would not be staying aboard this ship any longer than sundown.

Chapter 3

The winds began picking up as soon as they turned towards land; a sure sign of an oncoming storm that Hannibal refused to admit was the cause. The crew scrambled across the decks and readied the sails, even Will who helped just as much if not more than the rest of them.

Will could feel eyes on him as he worked, knowing that Hannibal was no doubt watching for a mistake to be made even though he was fighting hard to help them through the treacherous waters.

“Will!” Mischa yelled, Will turning just in time to feel the rains begin. He rushed to her, his hands on her shoulders.

“You must go back down to your room! It isn’t safe!”

Mischa laughed, “I have grown up on this ship, Will! I know just how unsafe it can be! You are the one who should be down in your room!”

He smiled, shaking his head as they both ran towards the others helping out as well as they could.

There was a shout and he turned his head to see Alana and Hannibal fighting over something. Will felt a twinge of remorse that him being thrown off was the cause of all this strife. The ship would have been in another possibly safer place entirely, and now they were in dangerous waters because Hannibal hated the sight of him.

“FANCY LOOK OUT!”

The shout came too late, Will did not move in time to miss the wood that moved of its own accord hitting him square in the forehead. He fell onto the deck, several crew coming to help though he attempted to stand on his own nearly falling again though this time someone caught him.

He looked up and saw Hannibal staring down, his brows furrowed and chest heaving against Will’s back. “YOU SHOULD NOT BE OUT HERE!,” Hannibal suddenly yelled, helping him to his feet though Will shrugged him off even as he stood somewhat disoriented still.

“I am trying to help,” he breathed, wiping hair off his forehead, “I...”

“You are not a member of this crew and should be downstairs where you belong.”

Will stepped back, his jaw tight as he nodded walking past Hannibal and down towards the room he’d been given. He stumbled again inside, grabbing onto the wall even as the ship struggled to remain still.

The small room felt like an even worse prison than the one he’d been rescued from.

He lay down with difficulty, wincing as his head hit the pillow and pressed his eyes closed in attempt to worry for what could be happening above him.

“Will?”

“Leave me be, Mischa.”

The door closed and he felt her sit down on the bedside, "My brother is an idiot."

He turned towards her, laying back as he shook his head. "No, I was in the way. He was right, I don't..."

Mischa grabbed his hand tightly, leaning over as she shook her head. "NO, you...no. Everyone likes you and it's only been a day! I...I'm sorry I was so mean, I..."

Will squeezed her hand, "You already apologized," he smiled, "I am so happy that I got to see you again. I had tried looking for you, after, and..."

Mischa looked down, "Hannibal came the evening of the funeral, he...I was so ready to find you and he..." she bit into her lip as Will fought the urge to beg for more information.

"I would not ask you to betray Hannibal's confidence," he patted the top of her hand before letting go, "If I cannot be a part your life I am happy to know you're a part of each other's."

He was caught off guard when she hugged him, wincing still at the pain in the back of his head and neck.

"Why did you get married? If you hadn't gotten married, I...I don't think he would have been so upset."

Will frowned, pushing her back gently, "I was alone, my father...I did not marry her until this past year. You do know this?"

Mischa nodded, "Yes, I...I've seen the papers. Hannibal was so certain you'd marry within the year after..."

"His death," Will finished, sitting up, "I mourned, Mischa. I mourned for nearly a decade before I gave into my father's demands. I...what I do not understand is why the man I thought loved me would run off and fake his death?"

He watched Mischa suddenly tug at her blonde curls, looking away, "I...if I could say it Will, believe me I would," she turned to look at him again with tears in her eyes, "He is a fool."

Will smiled sadly, feeling a rush of tears that he could not shed in front of her no matter how much he needed to. She did not need his pain on top of her own.

"So am I, little one."

Mischa let out a sob, hugging him again so hard that he fell back, feeling her shake against him as she let out feelings he could not.

"You know, I...do you remember the song I used to sing to you? When you were sick?"

Mischa nodded against his chest, "Hush, little baby."

Will laughed, "Yes. I...I used to imagine when we were young that you were my own. You know? I..."

Mischa lifted her head and Will was shocked at the anger there. "Your father, Will. It was your father."

Will frowned, "My father?"

She nodded, "That is all I can say."

Will reached out to touch her cheek, "Thank you."

Mischa smiled and laid against him again, "I once wished that you would come rescue us, you know? I...I used to dream that it was all a nightmare."

Will felt a pit in his chest and gritted his teeth, anger at his father coming unbidden but knowing it was justified. He would get the information he needed out of Hannibal, no matter how much his lost love wished him not to.

"My own dreams were quite similar, though in them the ground would open up and Hannibal..."

He paused as he heard a noise, looking towards the door and seeing Hannibal standing there staring openly at the two of them. Will breathed, "...would be alive and we would be a family."

The telltale sign of Mischa's silence made him realize she was asleep.

"The ship is safe?"

"Yes," Hannibal said, looking at his sister, "I will take her from you," he took one step inside and Will held onto her tightly.

"She is fine," Will snapped, "Go back to your duty, Captain."

Hannibal hardened his expression, nodding once as he left them alone again Will closing his eyes.

His father had done this.

He remembered his father's patient understanding after Hannibal's death, crying in his arms and feeling the comfort that only a parent can give their child when he needed it most.

The memories only served to make him even more anguished, imagining Mischa alone in all of this and hating Hannibal for doing that to his young sister no matter what the cause.

He began to drift into sleep, feeling Mischa grip tighter to him, tightening his own hold in return.

Will felt quite sore upon waking, rolling out of bed and walking up the stairs to meet the sun only to be greeted by one of the other crew members: a man named Brown who had shown him just yesterday how to spot land from a distance. He smiled and offered a tired, "Good morning," walking past Brown to have the man follow him across deck.

"Good morning, Fancy. Did you sleep well? I slept awful, the crew quarters are quite cramped and it's hard to sleep in something less comfortable than a hammock."

Will smiled, "The beds are not much better."

Brown grinned, "I would love to find out."

Will frowned, stepping back only to have the man come closer still. "Excuse me, I believe that I need to speak to the Captain."

His persistent follower stepped aside, bowing almost in jest as Will hurried away from him only to run into Jimmy who seemed to be fixing a hole in the ship's floorboards.

"Oh, I apologize!"

Jimmy grinned, shaking his head, "Don't worry, Fancy," he looked at Will with a grin, "I see you're looking much better this morning."

Will smiled, "I had a decent night's sleep once the storm winded down."

"As did we all, I know the Captain was more than ready to collapse near the end. He seemed quite shaken once you'd left the deck."

Will blushed, "I was in the way, I should not have attempted..."

Jimmy grabbed Will's hand, "No, you helped just as much as the rest of us did! Do not let him tell you otherwise!"

Will nodded, smiling, "Thank you."

"Now off with you! I have better things to do," he looked over Will's shoulder, "As do you."

Will turned to see Hannibal walking across the deck, the man deliberately not looking his way though he could not help but stare. Hannibal had only gotten more handsome as he'd aged, Will found himself wondering for a moment just what changes had happened beneath his clothing and blushed at the wanton thoughts.

"Breakfast?"

He turned to see Alana holding out a bowl of what looked like porridge, taking it and eating quickly, "Thank you."

"You're looking well, considering," she frowned, "How is your head?"

Will blushed again, "I am quite well, thank you."

"I have good news for you."

"I shudder to think what that could mean."

Will let her lead him over to a spot on deck he could sit upon, Alana sitting across from him on a box as she offered, "The captain is letting you stay until we can get you home properly."

He felt a mixture of relief and disbelief at her words. "What happened to dropping me off on shore?"

She grinned, "We were pulled way off course during the storm and it would be better to bring you home, as Mischa pointed out quite adamantly. You have about a fortnight to grace us with your presence longer."

Will scoffed, "I'm sure the Captain..."

"Is following the course as given, as we should all be."

Will did not look up, leaning down to eat his breakfast and ignored Hannibal completely.

“Captain, good morning.”

“Good morning,” Hannibal purred, making Will fight to keep memories of happier mornings between them from being conjured in his mind, “I take it you are all feeling well?”

“Quite,” Alana said, “I was just informing Will that he was going to be staying longer.”

“Ah,” Hannibal said, “I take it you would be happier back home than in a foreign land as Mischa pointed out and as we have to go back towards....”

“I was leaving that place for a reason, I have no desire to go back there,” Will snapped angrily glaring, “You would be better off selling me back to Chilton unless you’ve killed him then...”

“That will not happen,” Hannibal growled, “You will be taken back home.”

Will stood up so quickly his boots banged on the deck, stepping into the Captain’s space as he sneered, “I don’t care, take me there I will only get on the first ship away again. You have no idea...”

Hannibal stared him down and Will suddenly realized how close they were, closer than they’d been in so very long. The warmth of Hannibal’s breath on his lips made him shiver, taking a step back as he said with reddened cheeks, “I don’t give a damn, do what you wish.”

He took off nearly running from them, feeling a rush of lightheadedness at being so close to Hannibal after so long. His chest rose and fell as he walked, a foolish feeling that he just could not escape it seemed.

“Fancy?”

Will paused on the bottom stair, realizing he’d gone the opposite direction and stumbled upon where the rest of the crew slept.

Brown was sitting on a barrel smoking, looking up at Will with a frown.

“I went the wrong way,” Will said, “I apologize I’ll...”

He turned to leave again, suddenly stopping at Brown’s, “Wait.”

“I would not be good company at the moment Brown, I...”

“Call me Matt, I...I apologize for earlier.”

Will turned and saw a sheepish expression on the other man’s face. “I am not used to such impropriety, it’s...”

Matt pushed out the other barrel in front of him, Will eyeing it with suspicion. “I promise to keep my hands to myself.”

Will smiled and sat down, surprised when the other man pulled out a bottle handing it to him.

He eyed it before staring at his companion. "I am not the stuffed lord your Captain seems to think I am," Will mumbled, pulling off the top and taking a sip only to wince hard at the taste.

"No, you are not."

He looked up again and saw a familiar look in the other man's eyes. There had not been long since his wife's death, but it had been longer since he'd last lain with someone even longer still since he'd been with another man. The thought of taking what was offered was almost tempting if not for the idea that Hannibal would know of it.

Will did not want to hurt Hannibal, not as the other man seemed to be okay with hurting him.

"You are aware of my past with Captain Lecter."

"Il Mostro," Matt corrected, taking a drag of his cigarette, "The Captain is such a simple and tame name for him."

Will frowned, "Alana says..."

"Alana wants you to think the best of him, and I think you should know everything there is to know before that happens do you not?"

Will frowned, eyeing the drink in his hand. "Tell me."

"He killed Chilton, so no worry should befall you on that front," Matt laughed, "The man fell like a sack of potatoes and was left bleeding out in his own bed before we left his vessel."

Will imagined Hannibal walking into the other captain's quarters and dispatching away with him easily as Chilton slept. "He was not a good man," Will offered, "I'm sure a lot of people died because of Captain Chilton."

Matt scoffed, "He cut off his thumbs and kept them as a souvenir," he gave seeming delighted to do so, "He eats them, you know? The parts?"

Will paled, "I...no, I...that cannot be true."

Matt took the drink from him and Will stared at his own hand, moving his thumbs as he imagined them gone.

"He is not a good man, nor is he the same man you remember."

Will looked up again, his jaw tightening as he said, "I am not the man he remembers either."

Matt laughed, "I'm sure," he leaned over and his hand came to rest on Will's knee, "But you have never eaten a man's innards now have you?"

Will stood up and the barrel fell over, "I think I am needed above, excuse me."

"When you wish to know more, I would gladly be the one to tell you!" Matt called at his back, Will almost running from him only to crash into someone's chest in the doorway.

"I'm sorry I..."

He stared into Hannibal's narrowed eyes, the man looking behind him as he said, "You seem to have gotten lost."

Will let out a breath, "Yes, I was just about to right myself again if you would let me pass."

Hannibal moved out of his way and Will could feel the captain's eyes burning holes into him as he went.

His own room was easy to find though someone was waiting for him inside.

Mischa stared at him in worry. "Will, what is it?"

Will let out a breath, "I need to talk with you, it's about your brother."

Mischa frowned, starting up from the bed as she said quickly, "Will you know I cannot tell you what is..."

Will grabbed her hand and gently squeezed, "It is not about that, it is about Il Mostro."

Mischa paled, "How do you know that name? Who have you been talking to?"

Will let her go, crossing his arms. "Brown, he told me that Hannibal eats the men that he..."

Mischa grabbed onto his hands, "Will it is not...you do not know everything please do not let that," she sneered, "Jealous, spiteful man tell you things until you do because Hannibal is...he is not a monster, he..."

Will let go of her, "Tell me please, just..."

Mischa sat down on the bed, sighing, "You know how my parents died, yes?"

Will sat down beside her, "Yes, they were killed."

"By a bad man, he...after leaving you Hannibal went after the man and we ate his heart together."

Will stared at her, "Mischa."

Mischa's face crumbled, "He...he did not deserve to keep it, Will. Not after what he did. Not after that."

Will swallowed, grabbing her hand, "Tell me."

"After that Hannibal was not the same man. He left me in the care of governesses for nearly a year, drinking and wreaking havoc on the unsuspecting and was caught stealing from a man for something as ridiculous as a bet of all things," she sighed loudly, "That was when he met Jack."

Will frowned, "Where did he get the money for," he paused and it dawned almost immediately, "He took money from my father."

Mischa grabbed his hand, "Will, it is not what you think please listen."

Will let out a shaky breath, "Hannibal took money from my father to fake his death, he," his voice broke on the word, "left me for money?"

Mischa shook her head, “No, Will it is not...please just let me finish.”

He was shaking hard as tears came, closing his eyes and nearly overcome with grief of a different type. “That will be difficult.”

She squeezed his hand. “Please. Just, please.” Will said nothing and she continued, “Jack was like a father to us both, though not much older than Hannibal. He...Jack was the Captain of this ship before Hannibal was.”

Will whispered, “But the eating...”

“Animals in the wild do it often, Will, is that any different. The blood and meat of our enemies is a prize that we take part in,” she took back her hand and frowned, “We would never expect you to do the same. The rest of the crew does not take part.”

Will shook his head, “It does not exactly explain a thing to me, only raises more questions. You say Jack was important but where is he now? You say there is more to Hannibal being bought off than meets the eye but I see nothing but a coward who never loved me at all and only wanted a payment for services rendered!”

“Jack is dead,” she spat, turning on him, “And my brother took money because the alternative was too much to bear!” she stood up, “I cannot believe you would...I have to leave you now.”

Will did not say or do a thing, letting her go and laying back down on his bed to stare up at the ceiling and wonder if it was a good thing to stay here after all.

His love had become a monster, it seemed, and possibly Hannibal never loved him at all despite their whispered words of promise and forever.

Hot, bitter tears came flowing through him and Will fought the urge to follow Mischa’s path up the stairs and towards her brother’s quarters demanding answers.

How dare Hannibal act so betrayed after what he’d done?

Chapter 4

“You must kill Brown immediately,” Mischa said, throwing open his door and slamming it behind her, “He has told Will everything.”

Hannibal paused as he wrote, “Told Will what exactly?”

“He knows about the meat.”

He frowned, “I see.”

She threw her hands down on the table in front of him, “You see? What do you see brother? You know he is never going to want to...”

Hannibal put his hand over hers, “Mazasis, Will is not an option for me. He never should have been.”

Mischa looked pained, “Hannibal.”

“Mischa, it is not of my own fault at this but...”

“That man has dirtied your mind completely against yourself! You are not the same man you were then and you should....HE KNOWS ABOUT THE MONEY!”

Hannibal froze.

“He was asking about the meat and the killings, and I was trying to explain why we do what we do but he just looked aghast at the idea so I started to talk about Jack.”

She lay across the table, squeezing his hand as he whispered, “Mischa...”

“And I brought up my governesses and,” her lower lip trembled, “I am sorry, brolis.”

Hannibal closed his eyes, “It is just as well, it will give Will more reason not to want to stay.”

Mischa pushed his hand off of hers and he was surprised to be struck across the face, his eyes widening at the sight of her anger.

“You are a fool! You...”

The first rock of the ship followed closely by the second made them both stand up straight.

They were under attack.

Hannibal scanned the deck to find most of his crew firing back just as much as they were being fired upon when they came up the stairs. Francis and Zeller threw a bridge between the two vessels and Hannibal called out, “LET’S SHOW ‘EM WHAT WE’RE MADE OF!” relishing in the cries of excitement from his crew as they made their way across.

His cutlass came out with ease, cutting down and across men in front of him nothing but the fight on his mind as the blood flowed. He snarled, gripping the man in front of him and slitting his throat

open letting his kill fall dead. He turned and surveyed the fight around him, his eyes scanning suddenly for Will and seeing his love deep in battle with one of the final survivors aboard Bella's Pearl.

Will had gotten hold of a sword, though he held it wrong entirely and Hannibal was close to swinging back across, worried for his safety. He cried out, "Will!" which was a mistake, watching with horror as his love was grabbed and maneuvered expertly in a hold.

He searched for the nearest hanging rope but stopped, shocked when suddenly Brown was there to save Will in his stead cutting the man down and putting his arm on Will's shoulder. The look between them was a warm one, and Hannibal nearly snarled when someone touched his arm the same.

"What is it?"

It was Alana, breathless and speckled with blood across her cheek. "The ship is yours, Captain. I thought you may have liked to know," she looked across to see what he had been viewing, her smirk an annoyance. "You are lucky to have such a good crew, your occupied mind may have gotten you killed otherwise."

He snarled, sheathing his sword as he stomped off towards the lower decks wanting nothing more than to get away from her all too knowing gaze.

His stomping was loud enough to alert whoever was beneath, a feminine cry of, "Please, let me go!" made him hurry towards a similar cell to the one he'd saved Will from not long ago. A woman sat inside, her face and clothes quite dirty as she breathlessly asked with tears in her eyes, "You are not one of them?"

Hannibal reassured her, "I am not, I am here to help you," before he opened the cell.

She cried in relief, throwing herself in his arms and weeping, "Thank you, thank you," her sobs are somewhat forced if the thrust of her chest is anything to go by but he didn't question it.

"Your name?"

"Penelope," she said, "Your name sir?"

He considered using his real name, but instead said, "Il Mostro," and she just lays herself prostrate against his side till he nearly has to carry her up the stairs.

The crew all look at them when they come up, Penelope throwing herself over him and the narrowed eyed glares that came from his own people make him angrier than anything.

"Get back to work," he commanded, pulling the young blonde from the door and across to the ship.

She stumbled as he did so, breathless to keep up as he tried to ignore Will's stare passing him by without comment to take Penelope towards the beds.

The noise she made was a cross between a whimper and huff, "I am to sleep here?"

He wanted to throttle her, "As you have spent what I suspect was several days on the floor of a cell I would think any place would be better. Am I wrong?"

The woman smiled at him, her eyes batting coquettishly as she began to undo her top half leaning to sprawl herself against him again. "I had thought to show my thanks to my heroic savior."

Hannibal moved to throw her off when he heard footsteps behind him followed by a gasp of surprise.

"I guess we are interrupting, excuse us captain."

Hannibal turned in time to see Will's hurt look and Brown's triumphant one, his teeth rattling as he snarled in their wake.

"It is here or nowhere, madam. Excuse me."

He heard her indignant noise as he left, not caring in the slightest as his patch moved just slightly irritating his eye when he gets to deck.

The crew is celebrating in style and they've started to move again, he can see Katz and Bloom toasting with Will who seemed to wilt among them his eyes not looking up as Hannibal came closer.

"Our passenger is resting."

"I am sure after your attentions, she would need to Captain," Alana's tease is an ongoing one, though he almost feels Will's hurt from here and tried not to care.

His sister is nowhere to be found, no doubt taking their trophy and browning it for consumption as they always do. "It was not what it seemed."

"Not what it looked like to me," Will remarked, taking a long drink his eyes not leaving Hannibal's.

Hannibal said nothing, taking an offered drink from Katz who looked at him in anger that he had not experienced in quite some time from her.

"We see what we want to see," he said finally, taking his fill as he drank nearly all of the mead down in one go.

"I did not wish to see that," Will said, putting his mug down and leaving them.

Hannibal held his hand out and ordered, "More," ignoring the sad stare he received from his first mate.

Mischa did not show her appearance until the others had started their evening meal some time later, bringing him a small cut that they shared silently though that did not last long.

"Will is hurt, broliis. If you would just speak," she began and he held up his hand, "We have discussed this, mazasis, at length."

She glared, "Not to make amends but to assure him of your feeling," she mumbled, biting into her meat harshly, "Or what feeling you used to be capable of."

Hannibal considered her words carefully, his heart aching still to know that his Will was so close yet unable to be his.

“All the more reason for him to leave,” he said instead, eye closing as she pushed off the barrel of which she sat to leave him alone again.

Better for her to have time with Will, to bond again to him. He thought of them exchanging letters and remembered the letters that he’d written to his beloved away fighting in the war desperate to get home again and ask for Will’s hand.

He did not realize his hand was curling into a fist till he felt pain there, opening to find himself holding onto the ring that lay around his neck as always.

Things were better as they were; he knew that to be truer than anything.

Will was not his any longer and to think differently was foolish.

He was no longer going let love make him weak.

Chapter 5

Will was smiling, leaning his head on his companion's shoulder as he said again, "I do not know what he did to make me love him still after so very long."

Brown handed him another drink, which he gladly took, sipping at what had been harsh to the throat an hour ago but was now just pleasantly warm to taste.

"Love does not fade, Fancy," Brown said smiling, "Especially firsts. I still recall my own, lovely maid by the name of Trixie."

Will laughed, falling into Brown again, "Trixie? That does not sound much like a maid, Matt and more of a mare."

Brown laughed and Will fell over completely, landing in the other man's lap and staring up at him. They were both breathless as Matt leaned in almost touching Will's lips until a cleared throat interrupted them.

Will moved his gaze and smiled at Mischa. "Little one, you have come to join us!"

Mischa did not look happy and Will frowned, though she held out her hand for him to take. "I am not here to see Brown, Will," she spat, "Though I do see that I am just in time."

Will didn't know what she meant by that but hugged against her still, kissing Mischa's cheek as he said, "I missed you."

She sighed, "Come, I will walk you to bed."

He leaned on her shoulder as he called out, "Goodnight Matty!" laughing as the other man echoed back, "G'night Fancy."

Mischa got him up the stairs and onto the deck, Will breathing in the smell of the ocean breeze as he fought to remain upright. They began their walk across the deck and Will stopped halfway to stare at Hannibal who seemed tangled up in the captive from earlier he denied involvement with.

"Will, what is...?" Mischa asked, her eyes searching as she sighed, "Bastard."

"You speak of his love so insistently, little one, but...he took money to leave me, made me mourn him I cannot..."

Will pushed away from her and nearly ran from the deck, stumbling but catching himself still even as his cheeks reddened in embarrassment.

A clumsy fool that was what he was.

"Will!" Mischa ran to him, her arm around his shoulder, "Please do not let this upset you so."

He said nothing as she led him towards his small quarters, falling into bed and feeling sleep and sorrow overtake him.

"He never loved me, I see that now."

“He did, Will, I promise you there is an explanation that will soothe you I just....it is not mine to give.”

Will rolled onto his back and stared at her, his eyes glistening with tears.

“Then tell me another story, something you can tell.”

Mischa ran her hand over his cheek and he wiped away a tear as it fell down hers.

“I can tell you about Jack.”

Will smiled as he nodded, “Tell me.”

Mischa sat on the edge of his small bed, sighing as she seemed to struggle.

“When he left you, my brother was a mess. He...as I have said, I did not see him much that first year. He gambled, drank, killed, and debauched around the ton sometimes never even laying eyes on me for days on end though when he did it was always with a gift. A ring, a necklace, and one time a horse,” she laughed, shaking her head, “I only wished for his company but received anything but.”

Will offered, “That does not seem much like him.”

“No,” she shook her head, “He is not the same, as I have said, he...he was torn in half when he left you. Part of him is fighting this so hard because it will hurt more to gain you, only to experience the loss again when you leave.”

Will closed his eyes, a tear falling, “It will hit me when I am gone, I know, it hurts to look at him even for a moment.”

Mischa let out a breath, “Back to the story, I...Hannibal was gambling, drinking, killing, and being rakish all around the city which only made it easier for him to fall in with the wrong set of people. The man who was his undoing was named Verger. Mason Verger.”

Will could not recall the name, opening his eye to look at her, “Was?”

Mischa did not look away, “Yes. Was, as he is not living any longer.”

Will felt a chill at the way she spoke but did not argue, nodding for her to continue.

“Mason loved the very worst things and he...he loved to spent money as Hannibal did, though my brother did not know just how much until it was too late. Mason loved to gamble on anything, horses and sport mostly but even the lives of others. He often bet on who would marry who, it was...he loved to tear people apart,” she closed her eyes and Will reached out a hand to take hers, “Hannibal was quite shocked when Mason bet that he could not steal from the Marquis a diamond jewel that we had seen the man wear in public often. Mason was quite adamant that Hannibal could not steal it, and got my brother so drunk that Hannibal agreed he could.”

“He went to prison.”

“Yes,” Mischa said, “He was caught red handed and learned Mason was close friends with the Marquis, he’d grown tired of Hannibal and wished for him to be out of the way.”

Will squeezed her hand, "Mischa, what are you not telling me?"

She was trembling in his touch as she spoke, "Mason began to visit me not long after."

Will froze, the alcohol in his head making his thoughts murky, "He what? Mischa..."

Mischa shook her head, "He...he was quite nice to me, I didn't know what he'd done and I was so lonely and distraught," her lip trembled, "His sister tried to warn me off of him but I was young, so young. I thought of him as a brother."

Will felt an anger in him that was wild, his teeth snapping as he said, "Did he touch you? Mischa..."

She shook her head, "I...no, Hannibal stopped him from that."

"Your brother was in prison," Will said.

She smiled, "Was is the word, Will, I...I need to tell you about Jack, remember?"

Will pulled her close into a hug that had her clinging to him, "I am grateful to this Jack then, even in death, for helping Hannibal come back to you just in time."

"As am I," she whispered, "Jack was...he was imprisoned for a similar charge, it would be months before either of them were out and they bonded quite quickly in the short time they spent in jail. Hannibal was fascinated by the pirate life, he had never been on the sea but for the war and it seemed an easy way to escape his feelings."

Will rubbed his hand on her arm, "So they escaped?"

"Yes, the both did after a time. Jack taught Hannibal how to watch the guard changes and who was the easiest to charm out of their keys," she laughed, "I still love watching Hannibal charm his way out of someone else's belongings even now."

Will smiled, "He came right to you, your budding pirate brother."

"Yes," she tensed against him, "The house was unlocked and easy to get into, my brother found me battling for my innocence right in the front parlor without a chaperone. He fought with Mason quite ferociously, he...he cut off Mason's left hand leaving him to bleed to death as we left. The servants who Mason had paid met a similar fate, though Jack took care of them."

Will hugged her tightly, "You are certain he is dead."

She nodded, "Quite certain. He could not survive such an injury and the paper printed his obituary not long after."

Will felt his eyes droop as he said, "I am glad for it. If he was not, I would kill the man myself."

Mischa kissed his cheek, "I know you would, Will, I know. You are much stronger than my brother thinks you to be."

He laughed, "Not really, but for the right persons I would attempt anything."

Mischa laughed, "Though you do not seem to sufficient with a sword."

Will's eyes narrowed in mock dismay, "How dare you? I was taught by the finest fencing instructors from a boy, you recall that I fought your brother more than once and won swiftly."

Mischa giggled, "That was years ago, Fancy, when the poor neighbor boy only agreed because he fancied a kiss. Even then he let you win."

Will felt his heart tug at the memory, "Yes, he probably did."

They both seemed more somber then, sighing deeply. Mischa moved to sit up and Will squeezed her hand as she offered, "I could teach you, if you were so inclined. I am somewhat skilled and my brother was my instructor."

Will smiled, nodding, "I would like that very much, little one."

She leaned over and kissed his cheek, "In the morning then, Fancy," she winked, "I will throttle you thoroughly."

Will laid down completely, his eyes nearly closed as he answered. "I look forward to it."

He woke to a clang, shocked awake and groaning as his head caught up with the rest of his body.

"Wake up, Fancy," Beverly said, kicking the bed's edge, "You have someone waiting for you who does not like lateness."

Will blinked, sitting up and groaning again, "I do not know of whom you speak, but they can go to the devil today. I am not in the right set of head for anything but rest."

She tugged at his shoulder with a laugh, "Mischa had me bring down a proper sword for you, and lots of us are waiting to see her beat you so I suggest muddling through."

Will remembered his last words with Mischa the night before, sighing deeply as he eyed a rather large sword on the floor by his bed. "That is it?"

"Yes, that is a sword. If you need to be educated on even identifying one, I think Mischa has her work cut out for her."

Will blushed and leaned to pick it up, the heavy weight of it a surprise the one he'd used to fight before was quite smaller.

Not like this.

He turned it over in his hand, admiring the work and catching the letters H.L. written in script on the bottom of it. "This belongs to the Captain."

Beverly's look was of feigned surprise, her eyes widening so largely that he was sure they would pop off her face completely. "Is it?"

Will scoffed and stood up, heading for the deck only to be greeted with whistles and calls that added to his embarrassment. Mischa was waiting, her hand easily moving around the sword till she saw him and stopped. "Will! You're awake!"

She ran up and saw the sword, "Do you like it? It's..."

“Your brother’s,” he finished, “You cannot expect me to use this.”

Mischa scoffed, “He has so many, he will not at all miss this one. Come, show me what you can do.”

They spent the next several hours sparring, the sway of the ship making it harder than it should be but Will got the hang of the movement after a time. He was delighted to see how good Mischa was with a blade, though his embarrassment at being unable to beat her was at times humiliating.

Glistening with sweat and breathless they paused for another break to eat lunch, sitting on separate barrels as they dined and catching Hannibal coming out of his room followed by the captive woman who they had saved last evening.

“Sir,” she said breathlessly, nearly running, “Sir!”

Hannibal turned with a growl, “LEAVE ME BE WOMAN! I DID NOT WANT YOU LAST EVENING AND I DO NOT WANT YOU NOW!”

Will was delighted at his outburst, his smile wide as Hannibal turned and stopped to stare frowning as he left to take over navigation from Alana.

Mischa laughed, “You look overjoyed at that display,” she bit into her bread, “Almost too overjoyed for someone who thinks my brother never cared for him.”

Will frowned and ate his meager lunch, feeling his cheeks redden as he mumbled, “I was just happy to see him capable of self restraint, that is all.”

Mischa kicked at his shoe playfully, “I am sure.”

The next few days went by as such, Will waking early to have Mischa teach him in the light of sunrise and falling down exhausted by nightfall. He was enjoying their closeness again and it was nice to feel less helpless as their lessons progressed.

The third day of their lessons came and Will had not successfully gotten close to her for even a moment, the weight of the blade still a bother no matter what Mischa tried to explain.

“Will, you are doing wonderfully,” she spoke late night of their third lesson, “Do not let feel otherwise.”

Will sighed, rolling onto his side as he spoke, “If I could just figure the weight and proportion possible to a swing...no matter. The day is done and I believe I owe you a story in return for yours.”

Mischa paused, “You do not have to, I was not expecting reciprocation.”

Will smiled, “I know, but I wish to anyway,” he patted the bed beside him and she sat down with a laugh, laying her head on his shoulder.

“What do you wish to tell me?”

“I wish to talk about Molly.”

Mischa tensed beside him, “Your wife.”

“Yes. Do you wish to hear?”

She nodded once and said nothing as he began, “We met three years after you and Hannibal disappeared from my life,” he sighed, “It was still so hard for me to get close to anyone in that way but my father insisted on having me go to every ball during every season in hopes I would take a partner.”

“You always were a good dancer, and seem even better now.”

Will laughed, “I had a long time to practice. I...Molly was always alone, usually had a half full dance card but she did not wish to be there any more than I did. We met when I sidestepped a count who seemed too persistent in his attentions to her, asking for a dance that she seemed overjoyed to give me. Every ball after we shared at least one dance, speaking of our worst and most persistent suitors. This went on for nearly four years before she stole a kiss.”

Mischa gasped, “A bold woman, your wife.”

Will smiled, “Yes, she...she knew of Hannibal, of my pain and respected it but our close friendship was hard to keep merely friendly after so long and my shock made her think I was indifferent to the attention not speaking to me for several weeks.”

Will laughed, a tear rolling down his cheek, “She was surprised as ever when I climbed up the trellis and proposed like a lovesick fool.”

“Her father was no doubt furious.”

Will nodded, still smiling, “Yes, he was furious but she insisted on me and only me. We married less than a year later and she was pregnant the year after,” he paused, “She died giving birth quite early, the midwife explained to me that the babe was not positioned properly and she...could not stop the blood or the...” he paused, taking a breath, “I buried them both on the same day in the same coffin.”

Mischa hugged him, “Will, I am sorry.”

He nodded, “I was quite excited to be a father, really I was, but I know now that I would not have been a good one.”

“Will.”

He smiled at her sadly, “My father treated me like property to be given away at auction more often than not, and I did not know how to be a proper parent as I never had one of my own.”

Mischa’s lower lip trembled as she leaned in to kiss his cheek, “You were like a father to me, Will, even as I was older when we met I...I always wished to have you help my brother raise me. I...wished to be your sister and your daughter both.”

Will hugged her tightly, “Little one, I am sorry for all I missed but you have grown into such an amazing woman.”

Mischa’s shoulders shook as she cried into his shoulder, words not needed or spoken between them and Will held her as she fell asleep in his arms again knowing in the morning he would be proud to watch her beat him thoroughly again.

Will woke alone, feeling ready to begin his fourth day of lessons and share breakfast with the crew.

Alana was sitting on the edge of the ship when he got to deck, smiling at him as he held Hannibal's sword easily in one hand. "You are looking rather capable, Fancy," she teased, "Soon I think you could take on someone stronger than little Mischa."

Will scoffed, "She is stronger than she looks."

Mischa came up behind him and laughed, her arms at his sides. "Oh she knows, Will, she just is bitter that I have beat her even more than I have beaten you."

Alana glared, "That is not true, little monster, and you know it!"

Mischa giggled as she dragged Will to the middle of the deck, her stance strong as she waited for him to start. "Let's begin."

The fight was harsher this time, much to his surprise, and Will felt less sure footed than she had been before nearly falling once or twice as they sparred. He countered Mischa's attack only to nearly slip and have strong arms catch him.

"You are coddling him," Hannibal said with a frown, his sword suddenly hitting Will's with ease, their closeness making Will fight to get away, "You know this is not true fighting, mazasis."

"Brolis," Mischa said, her voice stern, "He is not a pirate."

Will pushed back and Hannibal laughed when he got away, "But he plays at being one quite well."

Will glared, his cheeks reddening at the insult, "You seem to have done so for nearly a decade, perhaps you can tell me your secrets Captain?"

Hannibal's lip curled at the insult and he came at Will suddenly, his eyes showing delight at Will's quick return attacks and soon it was more of a battle than a lesson. Will could not help but smile at the familiar glint in Hannibal's eye, breathless at finally getting the attention he'd craved for days already aboard the ship and desperate not to read more into this than instruction.

"I will show you how a real man fights, Will," Hannibal offered, the hit of his sword to Will's making contact quite brutally nearly having Will stumble though this time Hannibal took advantage pulling him in close their swords hitting again.

"I doubt, sir, that you fight like this with other men," Will said breathlessly, the rise and fall of Hannibal's chest making him warmer than he should have been.

Hannibal laughed, letting out a breath, "No, I must confess I do not," he looked at Will for far too long, "You are special I suppose."

The confession seemed to catch them both off guard, Hannibal letting Will's out of his hold as stepped back to catch his breath.

Will tried not to let himself hope, or read into this interaction that had been so much more like his Hannibal than any other before it but could not stop himself from doing so, "Do you remember the first time we fought?"

Hannibal looked at him, his eye warm. "Yes, you thoroughly trounced me."

“Mischa told me you let me win.”

Hannibal fought back a smile, “You will never know,” he sheathed his sword, “I must take my leave but it was quite entertaining.”

Will swallowed, “If you do not believe her to be teaching me properly, you could just take over yourself the duty.”

Hannibal paused before he turned, his gaze searching Will before he nodded once, “I suppose teaching you to defend yourself would be better for us all.”

Will waited to smile until he saw Hannibal’s back, the warmth in his chest a mistake he was sure but feeling so much better for it. He was in such a daze he did not see Mischa until she touched his shoulder, his sword out and clashing with hers as she laughed.

“You were caught in a daydream, Will,” she looked back to where Hannibal stood away from them speaking to Alana, “So is he.”

Will blushed, “No, he just wishes to teach me so I do not allow others to be hurt in return.”

Mischa sighed loudly, “The fools you both are, oh how it vexes me.”

Will laughed and threw his arm around her shoulder, “He has agreed to teach me more.”

Mischa seemed surprised, “He said as such?”

“Yes, as I said he wishes to make me less of a weak link among you.”

Mischa’s smile was radiant, “Oh I am quite sure that is the only reason. Though I am glad for it, my hand was starting to hurt me.”

Will laughed and they headed for lunch, his steps lighter as he made his way across the deck and tried not to think of what tomorrow would bring.

Chapter 6

Chapter Summary

Now with the lovely LionheartGirl90 as my beta.

Will woke with the sun, eager to begin his promised lessons but also ready to practice so he could hope to coax more gentle smiles from Hannibal again.

The crew he saw as he stepped on deck were of the less known to him, nodding at his appearance and pleasant enough as he appeared but no one attempting to talk to him.

Will spotted Francis readying around with others he did not know by name, the two of them sharing a look longer than any other since his arrival and Will nodded slightly as he started to fight an invisible opponent.

He did not notice company until he heard, "You are becoming quite the swordsman."

Will paused at Francis's compliment, smiling. "Thank you. I...I have enjoyed every part of learning, it is not something I was accustomed to beyond fencing lessons as a young man."

Francis eyed him carefully before he asked, "You are an Earl."

Will nodded again, "My father's family carried on the title, it is not my choice I promise you."

He saw a slight smile on the other man's face. "I was destined for such things, but my parents' shame kept me in the darkness and my grandmother was my primary caregiver," he no longer smiled, "She was not one for warmth or lessons. I was lucky to live to as old as I am now."

Will paled, "I...I'm sorry. People can be cruel about things that they do not understand."

Francis shook his head, scoffing. "That is not," he touched his hand to Will's blade, "I was ready to hang myself when the captain found me wallowing in my grotesqueness. He made me an offer I could not refuse."

Will swallowed, "Hannibal has always been a generous man."

"Yes," Francis said, seeing something over Will's shoulder as he let go of the sword, "I just wished to inform you that not all opinions shared of him are friendly or familial. I am indebted to him, but I think his methods just. Every one of them."

Will let out a breath, "I understand."

"I hope I am not interrupting," Hannibal said from behind Will, making him turn and shake his head.

"Francis was just regaling me tales of your first meeting."

He saw Hannibal's eyes narrow slightly, the cold monster back that he'd been given nearly all of his time aboard. "I hope he is speaking favorably of it."

"He says you saved his life."

Hannibal nodded, "I gave him a reason to continue, so I suppose I did just that," he eyed Will's sword, "Shall we begin?"

Will said nothing and nodded, stepping back and trying to calm his heart. There had never been a time when Hannibal Lecter could not make his heart race just at the sight of him and he realized that the same was true still though after so long his immunity had gone down again to nothing.

The flow and ebb of movement was easier this time, not an attack but a dance Will realized. It had been so very long since they danced.

His heart started to dwell in memory, parrying Hannibal's blade by seconds before he was too far into reminiscing to pay attention and humiliate himself once again.

He saw a warmth in Hannibal's uncovered eye, a building storm as their bodies came into contact more than once and Will nearly pretended to stumble in hopes they could be closer again.

The ship shook and he nearly did, readying himself as they both turned to see a darkening sky not even realizing that the winds had started to change.

Hannibal's breath was labored as he promised, "We will resume this later."

Will nodded as he ran off towards the front of the ship and took the wheel from Alana who seemed grateful as Will ran to help the others.

This storm was not nearly as bad as the last, Will felt the ship settle much faster even as the rain started covering him where he stood.

"Will?"

He turned to see Alana, wet haired and exhausted where she stood smiling even through the downpour.

"We will make a seaman out of you yet, Fancy."

Will laughed, "Do not let the Captain hear you say such things!"

She looked towards the wheel where he knew Hannibal was steering, then back at Will as if comparing the two of them.

"I do not think he would mind!"

Will went down towards where he knew Mischa's lodgings to be though he'd never been near them before and the temptation to peer into Hannibal's while the captain was occupied was hard to resist.

There was no one inside Mischa's room and he still stepped inside, noting the sparkled baubles she has told him of nights ago that surrounded it and also spotting something out of his past among them.

A small stuffed creature that he was sure could only be the leopard stuffed toy he'd given her not long before they'd parted ways. He ran his hand over it and felt the familiar ache again his anger started to build once more.

Whatever reason Hannibal had for his deception Will feared would not be enough to get through this feeling.

He picked the creature up and paused as he heard, "She would not let go of it, no matter how many I attempted to use as replacement."

Will put the leopard down and turned, his vision blurring through tears as he stared Hannibal down.

"How many did you use in attempt to replace me?"

He saw a flicker of remorse from the man in front of him, a twitch that could only mean there were some.

"Too many to count," Hannibal confessed, his voice thick, "Will I..."

Will turned away, not wishing to hear more. "The ship is secure? I did not feel any more movement."

Hannibal paused. "Yes, the storm has calmed. If you would wish to continue from earlier I..."

Will shook his head, "I am getting famished and I believe you should get back to your duties as well. I've been too much of a hindrance already."

He started past Hannibal and felt the other man move just enough to nearly take his arm but felt nothing, needing to be away as soon as possible.

Mischa was on deck when he got up, laughing amidst the other crew as Will felt more an outsider than ever.

He nearly got towards the other half of the ship with no one stopping him when his hand was grabbed, Will turning to stare strangely at the interrupter.

"You okay, Fancy?" Beverly asked, concern written plainly across her face.

Will smiled, nodding once before his lie came out sounding normal enough to pass for truth.

"Yes, I am just tired. I did not expect all of this so early in the morning."

She frowned still, her hand dropping as she suggested, "You should eat, it's not..."

Will felt the hold he had on his emotion crumbling, shaking his head again. "I think I'll just rest a bit. Tell Mischa good morning for me, please."

He turned and swiftly made it off deck, rushing down to calm himself in private.

With a deep breath, he closed his eyes and recalled his state of mind before any of this mess. The ship he'd been aboard had been taking him away from his father's continued interruptions on his life and the reminders that made him think there was some force at work continuing to take those he fell in love with away from him.

A new life in the states, away from the mess that was his current life and possibly a start to a new one was torn apart by Chilton's attack.

No matter what he hoped there was not a life for him here, only sad reminders and an overwhelming urge to connect to a long dead love.

There was a quiet knock and Will locked eyes with the visitor who came through without being prompted.

"Bloom," he said with a grin, "I am not feeling much up for visitors."

Alana's hand came to the sword at her side, a deep sigh escaping when she spoke, "We are being boarded."

Will's eyes widened with alarm and he stood up, searching for sword, "Another attack? I did not hear any shooting or..."

Alana's hand came to his shoulder, her expression troubling, "No, a ship we're friendly with but," her eyes met his again, "I think it better if you stay below."

Will frowned, stepping back. "Better? For whom?"

She sighed again, "Captain Bedelia is quite admirable," she laughed as she blushed, "Believe me I know her well but there is a member of her crew that you may be surprised to..."

Will felt his reserve start to crumble, "One of Hannibal's lovers?"

Alana reached for him again, "Fancy..."

He stepped around her and went through the door, his anger overpowering his sadness as he made his way up to the deck.

There was a rush of activity with unfamiliar and familiar people carrying crates on and off between ships, He scanned the deck for Hannibal spotting the captain among a larger crowd, an unfamiliar man draped against him though both men's backs were to Will.

Will felt his anger rising, bitter on his tongue, heading for them when suddenly he was stopped.

Mischa seemed to appear out of nowhere, breathless and looking worried for him.

"Will, I think you should go below deck," she coaxed, "It is not exactly the right time for..."

He swallowed, shaking his head before he smiled. "I think I'm fine here. Are you going to introduce me?"

"Will..."

Will left her, not saying a word as he neared the new arrivals. He noted that the captive woman from earlier was among the larger crowd, draping herself to the new woman captain who he could see the appeal for: she was fair skinned and far too put together to be a pirate but Will thought her a formidable one by the look she gave off alone.

"Am I late to the party?" he asked, several heads turning his way.

He saw Hannibal shake off his companion, the man looking at Will with interest.

The woman, Bedelia he recalled, smirked, "You have found another stray?" she looked Will over, "This one looks less worn."

Will heard an indignant noise from the other captive in question, starting to speak when Hannibal spoke over him, "He is a guest, not a captive and not open for company."

He turned, surprised at the thinly veiled anger in Hannibal's eyes.

"You speak for me now, captain? I was not aware."

"I did not..."

"You did," Will spat, turning to look at the other captain, "I am not interested milady but thank you for the offer," he held out his hand and she took it, her smile widening, "William Graham."

He heard a noise from his right but did not turn.

"Captain Bedelia Du Maurier," the smoothness of her voice spoke of admiration now, "It is a pleasure," she smiled, "You are cultured."

Will let go of her hand and bowed, "I do not find myself so, but I was not raised poorly if that is what you mean."

He stood up and saw her lock eyes with Hannibal, "You would do well from such an addition to your crew, Il Mostro."

"He is not staying," Hannibal snapped, "And it is about time for you to depart as well madam."

Will noted that he looked even angrier now and felt somewhat lighted for it, his own hopeless notions fooling him again into thinking things he should not.

"No, I am not."

"Could we keep him then?" the man who was no doubt one of Will's replacements asked, stepping closer to him.

"I am not interested in piracy," Will snapped, "Nor pirates."

"Will is a Earl," he heard Mischa say from behind him, thinking she was helping but he knew that could not be further from the truth.

"Oh yes?" the stranger said, bowing, "It is nice to meet you Earl...Will, is it?"

Will glared at him, his anger rising, "Yes. I did not catch your name."

"Dimmond," the man said, still smiling, "I have heard yours quite often...in varying octaves."

Will wanted to slap him, his rage building by the moment as he started to shake and step forward only for a strong arm suddenly holding him back. Hannibal looked just as angry as he did, but the look was not directed at Will but Dimmond. "Watch your tongue," he growled, turning to Bedelia, "We are done here."

She smiled, "Yes, I believe we are. Come Anthony."

The two walked off and Will relaxed, nearly falling into Hannibal's arm where it still was draped against him. His breath left him, eyes closing as he said, "That was..."

Mischa's hand came to Will's side, standing between them and pushing Hannibal's arm off him. "See what your ridiculousness is doing? This is insanity, broliis, if you would just..."

His eyes opened as she spoke, feeling such a mixture of emotions that it was hard to stick to just one. He put his hand on Mischa's, "Stop, please just stop," he looked at Hannibal, "I need to speak with you alone."

"Will..."

Will saw Hannibal's expression soften, making him look like the man he remembered so vividly as he asked, "Please?"

Hannibal nodded once, Mischa looking ready to speak as they both left the deck to head for his quarters down below. He watched the other ship moving away from them, two aboard staring intently across at them as they moved.

"We have an audience," Will said, turning away again, "They are more interested in you than they should be."

"No one has ever seen a weakness in me that is not my sister," Hannibal said, "I never show much emotion in the presence of potential enemies as such weakness can be exploited quite easily."

Will allowed Hannibal to open the door to the lower deck for him, turning to look at him with intent, "We all have our weaknesses."

Hannibal's one exposed eye held such emotion that Will felt himself crumble, but did not wish to look away, "I cannot afford to have any."

Will walked ahead, the unease between them increasing with every step down. He could feel Hannibal at his back and suddenly recalled other times Hannibal had been in the same position. His face heated with the vivid pictures his mind threw out, and when they came to stop in front of Hannibal's door Will knew his cheeks were bright red.

"The door is open."

He pushed inside, taking a long breath and walking to the furthest corner of the rather large room. Everything about the room was unlike the Hannibal Will remembered. The opulence of it, the plush bedding and golden edges to it all seemed more worthy of a palace than a pirate.

"This place seems very little like yours," Will confessed, not turning around as he stared out of a large window the calming sea staring back only making his stomach churn.

"I did not have much say in it, my predecessor made it to his own specifications and I...I kept most in memory of him."

Will swallowed, "Jack."

A pause.

He turned, seeing Hannibal's surprised expression. "Mischa spoke of him."

A smile. "She was close to him," Hannibal confessed, "We both were."

Will felt no need to smile in return. "That man, that...Anthony."

Hannibal's face fell. "Yes, he was one of my...attempts at missing you."

Will tried not to let tears fall as he spoke, "You spoke my name in...in his arms."

"Will..."

Will's breath was ragged, "I do not understand, help me to understand," he breathed in, "You speak of forgetting me in one breath and missing me in another, and your sister...she told me of the arrangement with my father."

Hannibal's jaw clenched. "It was more of a demand."

Will was trembling with rage as he growled, "You were NEVER afraid of my father, Hannibal. NEVER."

Hannibal looked away, "I was not afraid of him, no. But I knew better than to question him, he... Will, I..."

Will stomped over to him, stopping just short of touching but his mind screamed at him to take out the anger in some way. "How could you DO that to me? You...you spoke of marrying me! You spoke of us continuing our lives together and then to...I mourned you! I...I could not get out of bed for days, months, and I..."

Hannibal reached out to touch him, "Mylimasis."

Will pushed him off, "If I cannot use that word then neither can you!"

Hannibal's hand shook as he spoke, "Your father spoke of you being betrothed to the queen's cousin."

Will let out a breath, "Kristina, she...she was the queen's sister not cousin and I...refused the match."

Hannibal let out a breath, "He told me that I did not deserve to have your hand, that I...I was gutter trash that he would allow you to dalliance with but never to wed," he looked at Will with his eye teary, "I..."

Will shook his head, "What does his opinion matter? Why would that make you hurt me so? I...I was prepared to follow you, on more than one occasion after I was given the news."

Hannibal's eye widened, "Will..."

"I told my father I would rather die than marry anyone else, even after you were gone," Will could barely see for his tears, "You left me nothing. No one. I had no one. Not even Mischa."

A tear fell from Hannibal's eye and Will wiped at his own as he turned away again. "You had no reason to listen to him."

“He would have disowned you, he...he would have made it his mission to ruin us both.”

Will rounded on him, his eyes wild as he pushed Hannibal hard causing the pirate to stumble. “I WOULD NOT HAVE CARED! I WOULD HAVE LIVED IN THE DIRT AND ON THE STREETS IF IT MEANT I COULD BE IN YOUR ARMS!”

Hannibal shook his head, “You do not realize...”

“I do not realize?” Will laughed, “I have spent days aboard this ship thinking that I had done something wrong to make you do such a horrible thing when the only thing I did was love and trust you. I...you were my everything,” he let out a shaky breath.

Hannibal’s voice was hoarse as he confessed, “As you were mine.”

Will wiped at his face again, swallowing thickly as he breathed, “I am glad to know the truth of it, finally,” Will tried not to let his tears flow again as he finished, “Now I can leave without thoughts of a future between us.”

Hannibal turned away, “Yes, I suppose that is best,” he sighed, “I am sorry, Will, for the entirety of it. I know it does not help now.”

Will turned as well, vision blurring again for his tears, “No it does not. I think I will retire early, please inform the crew to leave me in peace.”

Hannibal’s whispered, “I will,” made Will’s heart ache even more as he walked out of the room and closed the door pressing his head against it as he closed his eyes.

“Will?”

He saw Mischa standing there, her face a mess of emotion and it took everything in him to shake his head, moving from the door to walk past though her hand on his stopped him cold.

“Oh Will, I kept telling him, I kept...I knew you would not wed someone else so easily, I knew,” Mischa cried, squeezing his hand, “I wanted to tell you, I did, I wrote letters and kept them I...”

Will shook his head, again, squeezing her hand once more. “I cannot forgive someone who would hurt me so, Mischa, I cannot.”

He let her go and walked away, ignoring the pain in his chest as the steps put distance between the Lecter siblings and him once again.

The crew on deck looked at the sound of the door closing when he reached the deck, Will rushing through and happy to be allowed peace to mourn again. His shoulders shook as soon as he hit the bed, the threadbare blanket in his arms a buffer between the noise he made letting go of his emotions finally.

He would have preferred Hannibal dead to this pain.

Chapter 7

“Will,” someone was shaking him, and Will pushed back in annoyance.

“Will, we’ve made port,” the voice said softly, making Will open one eye. He looked at Beverly, who seemed to be trying her hardest to smile but he could see the pity in her eyes.

“I’m to leave?” he asked, suddenly finding the prospect gutting.

“No,” her voice was louder than it should be and Will was surprised to see her blush, “I did not mean to...we’ve made port to rid ourselves of that blasted woman Penelope.”

Will smiled, “I see,” he sat up slowly, “You are coming to let me know I can go into the city.”

He watched Beverly thinking before she spoke, “If you’d like,” she prompted, “Bloom and I are going off the ship for a walk, hoping to get some new supplies and trade a few things. She thought you might want a reprieve.”

Will thought for a moment and nodded his head, “Thank you, I...I will get myself ready.”

“If you’d care to bathe,” she said, looking conflicted, “Mischa has kindly offered you her rooms for privacy.”

Will bristled at the thought of seeing either of the Lecters now, his mind had been made up to keep as little contact as possible with them till he left the ship completely.

“Do I smell so hideously?”

Beverly laughed, “I can get you some perfumes, if you’d like?”

Will nodded his head as she left, standing and staring around the quiet room as his mind attempted to wander where he didn’t want it to go.

Another knock and he thought nothing of saying, “Come in,” surprised to see Brown on the other side of the door.

“You are leaving?”

Will shook his head, “Just going with Bloom and Katz into town,” he smiled, “You were worried you’d miss me?”

Brown took a step inside and Will was surprised but not threatened by the intent in his eyes. It would be so easy to give into this dance, a simple nod of his head and he was sure this man would devour him whole.

But he did nothing, feeling worn out and hollow more than ever before.

“I enjoy your company, Will,” Brown said, stopping just before Will’s bed.

It was quite improper for him to be in Will's room at all, but pirates seemed to have little boundaries and Will was not caring for them lately either the longer he was aboard this ship.

"My head and my heart may be muddled, Brown, but I am not blind," Brown smirked, stepping forward just as Will put up a hand, "That was not an invitation."

The other man's eyes narrowed, his cocksure smirk gone as he said, "You still persist in allowing Hannibal to rule your heart."

Will glared, "No one rules my anything, or touches me without explicit permission. If you would kindly..."

"Will?" Both of them stopped and saw Beverly in the doorway, her eyes darkening as she took in the scene, "Is everything all right?"

Will nodded, "Matt was just leaving."

Brown left in a rush, nearly pushing Beverly over as he left. After he'd gone she asked, "Was he inflicting unwanted attentions on you? Because the Captain..."

Will tensed at even a base mention of Hannibal, shaking his head, "No, he...I made sure he knew I was not interested. He won't bother me again."

She did not look so convinced but nodded, handing him a satchel filled with perfumes and also a change of clothes. "We'll wait for you on deck."

Will did not take long to dress and change, not caring much for his appearance beyond the smell and when he got up to deck was surprised to see it empty.

No one was around at all, not even the Captain, though he was sure someone had stayed to watch the ship in the crew's absence.

He frowned, heading to depart the ship completely when he heard, "They're waiting for you, in town," the sound of Francis's voice not unwelcome.

He smiled over his shoulder, "Alana and Beverly?"

Francis nodded, "The Captain and I will look after the ship."

Will was happy to hear Hannibal was staying aboard, nodding once to Francis as he took his first step on land in nearly two weeks.

The city was bustling with activity as he walked through, children crying in the streets and some beggars holding out hope for coin. Will felt awful for not having any, trying not to look at them as he passed but feeling worse the more he saw.

"Will!"

He looked up with relief and headed for Bloom and Katz, the two of them gesturing towards him as he rushed over. "I have just realized I am completely penniless until I arrive home."

Both women smiled at each other and Alana reached into her pocket pulling out a coin purse she put into his hand. "You honestly think the Captain wouldn't give me coin for you?"

Will frowned at the gift, full of more coin than he needed at all really, and then back at his companions. "I do not wish for his money."

"Will..."

He opened the coin purse and took out much of it, walking back over to the throngs of beggars he'd walked by and passed out whatever he had returning to the two women with a smile. "There."

"That was more money than even I was given," Alana said, her eyes wide, "You wasted it."

Will laughed, "If the captain wished for me to spend his money how I liked, I have just done it," he put the remaining coins in his hand, "The rest will be for our lunch."

Both women laughed at him, shaking their heads as they walked through the crowd.

They spent the day buying new things and trading others, Will barely able to keep track of it all as he watched how deftly Alana was able to handle most trades. She crafted her way through any discussions, calling out most men who would not deal with her even before Will did and by the end gained most as new allies.

Their meal was spent in a tavern, Will had graciously offered to pay for whatever they both wished and spent the remainder of time just enjoying each other's company.

Will watched Alana eating a rather large piece of meat, cutting into and sharing with Katz, which made him think immediately of Hannibal and Mischa.

"It doesn't bother you?"

Both women looked at him. "What?"

He looked at the meat on both their plates.

Alana's eyes narrowed, "No, we do not partake and neither do the rest of the crew," she bit into her meat, "Animals eat the flesh of their enemies, Will, it is not as if there is not some part of them in all of us."

Will scoffed, "We are not animals."

"Aren't we?" Katz asked, laughing, "I know I can be at times and the Captain..."

Will cut in, "The Captain gets pleasure from it, and has brainwashed Mischa into the same."

Both women looked less than pleased with him.

"Is that what you think?" Alana asked, "Truly?"

Will's stomach felt in knots as he nodded, the gesture itself feeling like a lie.

"Then we need not continue this discussion."

The remainder of their meal was silent, Will realizing he'd ruined it completely but still standing for his opinion even as the two women gave him a wide berth as they left the establishment.

The ship was bustling with activity as they arrived, the captain and Mischa both on board as Will walked back on trying to ignore the look of relief on both their faces that he'd returned.

Mischa came to rush to his side, attempting to take his arm though Will stepped back just enough so she could not.

"Will?"

"I," he took a breath, "I am feeling quite worn, I will forego anymore attentions this evening."

He bowed and tried not to turn back, knowing the dismissal would upset Mischa but not knowing how to guard himself against her continued affection.

There was no need for it now that he knew his staying was an impossibility.

His room would be the only respite upon his thoughts, heading there even as his feet dragged and when he walked inside he stopped, seeing Matt lying already on his bed his shirt and legs open in invitation.

"I told you I was not interested."

Brown sat up, smirking as he looked at Will in a leer. "I do not believe you. The times we have spent together...."

Will slammed the door behind him. "Were times where I was either emotionally compromised or quite drunk, you cannot even imagine for a moment that I have thought of you in that way."

He stepped back as the Matt stepped forward, Will rushing into him and pulling Matt's shirt together. "Please, leave."

An arm around his shoulder and a whispered, "Do you really wish me to?"

Will moved to untangle himself and was pulled into a rather harsh kiss, pushing back as he heard the door open behind him.

Hannibal stood stock still in the doorway, eye taking in the scene between them. His voice was thin and cold when he spoke.

"I was coming to speak with you, but I see you are otherwise engaged. Excuse me."

Will pushed Matt away and said, "It's not...!" just as Hannibal slammed the door, Will pushing at Brown again, "How dare you? You..."

Matt smiled at him, buttoning his shirt as he teased, "How dare I? You yourself have no wish to torture yourself with the captain's behavior towards you, I have done you quite the favor," he reached out for Will only for Will to attempt hitting him, "I apologize for the misunderstanding."

He left and Will thought for a moment of rushing out and explaining himself to Hannibal but then thought against it.

There was no reason to do so, it was not like he needed to have a clear understanding with the captain beyond their current one.

Will sighed, climbing to lay on his bed and rest again with the weariness of the day overtaking him almost immediately as his head hit the pillow.

He woke when the ship started to shake, jumping up in bed and grabbing for his sword to head for the deck.

What he saw there was chaos.

The crew was in a fight for their lives, Will saw Bloom and Katz both fighting back to back assailants; their faces determined as he headed for them only to hear a grunt of surprise to his left as someone fell into him.

It was Francis, holding his side and spitting on the ground. "You should not be here," he growled, thrusting his sword up and blocking an attack that Will barely saw coming.

"What's happened? I...where is the captain?"

Will looked up and saw Hannibal in a fight amongst several men, his face a mess of sweat and blood as he sneered his sword catching every hit as he moved. His relief at the sight was overwhelming, taking a deep breath as he turned only to narrowly miss an attack of his own.

The man smirked, "I did not know Il Mostro had a pet aboard his vessel."

Will bared his teeth as he fought back, his sword nearly cutting the other man's hand as they parried, a elbow to the chest making him grunt back, "Who are you? What's the meaning of this?"

The man laughed, shaking his head as he pressed against Will fully his blade coming to cross Will's as they were close enough that Will felt breath on his cheek.

"Not a very good pet, are you?"

Will growled, a long yell as he attacked again determined to kill this stranger no matter who he was.

"Will!"

He turned towards the voice, his attacker lunging as Will feigned left grabbing into his neck and thrusting his sword. Will let the body go, watching as it fell.

Someone collided with his back, Will rounding with his sword drawn only to grab Mischa into a tight embrace forgetting his earlier promise of ignoring both Lecter siblings. He kissed her cheek, "Thank goodness, you're okay."

She was shaking in his arms, sword still drawn and poking into his thigh as she spoke, "They came from nowhere, we..."

Both of them separated and were back to fighting again, Will carefully leaning back against her to protect them both.

Their assailants were downed easily, Will barely having to fight back as he turned to Mischa again only for her to whisper, "No, no, no," as Will followed where she was staring.

Hannibal was fighting still, his clothing worn and bloodied as he continued to move. Will saw an unearthly hunger in his eyes, the hatred there something he had never witnessed before and looked to see who he fought.

The man was fair haired, clothing quite fanciful and garish which Will made think he may be the captain of this monstrous crew. He said, "Who is that, Mischa?"

She did not answer him, seemingly stiff at his side and when Will put a hand on her arm she jumped eyes wide.

"Mischa?"

"Mason," she spoke the name as if speaking of a monster, "Will it is him."

Will's eyes went back to the fight at hand, suddenly snarling, "You spoke of his death, he..."

Another attack Will side stepping as suddenly Bloom came at his side, her face a mix of worry and excitement. "Need some help, Fancy?"

Will pushed back his attacker and growled, "That man, the captain knows that man."

Alana attacked the man who'd come to them, easily tossing him aside. "That one? He is no one that I seemed to recognize."

"Please, you need to help him now and I..."

"NO!" Mischa yelled, running as Will turned again watching in horror as Mason seemed to have Hannibal trapped against the wheel. He ran, sword in hand and feeling terror unlike any he had known in all his years.

He would not lose him again.

Not like this.

He stopped, staring up at the hanging ropes above him and cut the nearest, surprised to see he'd picked the correct one as he swung across the ship nearly falling on his landing above.

"Well, well, well! It looks as if we have a visitor!"

He saw Hannibal struggle to move, his face a mess of cuts and bruises. "Will, no," he panted, "You must..."

Mason grabbed Hannibal's tired body, pulling the captain taut against him as he smiled at Will. "So this is Will, is it? I have heard so much about you."

Will sneered, "From whom? I do not recall us ever meeting before, sir."

Mason laughed, his hand tightening against Hannibal who groaned, "We haven't, but the last ship I was on was quite helpful in locating this one."

"Bedelia," Will growled, "They told you of us?"

Mason pressed his hook to Hannibal's throat, squeezing hard and tightening his hold.

“Quite happily, really. The Monster and his Fancy Earl, they said,” he chuckled, “They were pleased to share the news of where to find you before I left them.”

Will had never felt such fury before, such hate, and wanted nothing more than to bite at this man’s flesh and tear into the bone. “Let him go and I may not have to hurt you.”

Mason laughed, Will stepping forward only for the other captain to press his hook deeper against Hannibal’s throat. “One step and I slit him open.”

Hannibal stared at Will tiredly, the fight seemingly haven gone out of him completely.

“Hannibal.”

“As atsiprasau uz grianua tai, ka galejo buvo musu amzinai.”

(I am sorry for ruining what could have been our forever)

Will had no idea what he’d said, but shook his head, “No, no, please,” Will begged, “Please just...”

Mason grinned, “I am not a bad man,” he said softly, his hooked hand glistening in the light of the moon, “If you would just come with me, I will let your captain...”

Hannibal suddenly seemed to get a renewed vigor, growling out incoherent words as he struggled and Will ran towards Mason only to cry out when suddenly Hannibal fell to the wood clutching his side.

“NO!” Will sobbed, rushing at Mason’s back and thrusting his sword in easily, again and again as the blood soaked Will’s front, “No, you...no, no, NO!” he pulled his sword out and let the body fall, rushing to Hannibal’s side as he knelt.

Hannibal’s eyes were half open as he smiled, reaching out to touch Will’s cheek.

“You have only gotten more beautiful,” he forced, coughing.

Will shook his head, “You stupid idiot, you...”

Hannibal moved to reach up with his other hand and groaned, “Will...”

Will leaned in close and pressed his lips to Hannibal’s softly, a sob escaping him as he whispered, “Please, do not leave me again. I cannot bear it twice. I...”

“Will!”

He looked up and saw the others coming, wiping at his cheeks as he said, “He needs doctoring! He...”

Mischa was first to arrive, falling at Hannibal’s side as she shook her head, “Brolis, no, no please.”

Will could not stop his tears as he lay his head down on Hannibal’s chest, grabbing his hand, “Mylimasis.”

Someone tried to pull him from the body and Will growled, sword at the crew member’s throat but Alana said, “Will, they need to save him, please.”

He watched several of the crew carry Hannibal off, the fight having gone out of him as he leaned against the wheel. A hand on his shoulder and Will leaned into Mischa's touch, grabbing and pulling her in close to whisper, "I will take care of you, no matter what happens."

Chapter 8

Hours later, Will sat in a hardback chair holding Hannibal's hand at his bedside with Mischa doing the same. The doctoring had been a combined effort between Jimmy, Francis, and Alana who seemed to know more about such things than Will would have expected. Although it was only a hope he would wake, Will still did not believe that for a moment having seen the size of the cut and how close it came to searing him through.

He squeezed Hannibal's hand and brought it to his cheek. "I cannot do this again, please. Just please."

No response, though Will had not expected as such.

There was a constant influx of visits from those who'd help doctor him: Jimmy, Francis, and Alana were quite attentive and Will realized just how much loyalty Hannibal brought out in his crew by the worry in their eyes.

Mischa slept near half the day, her head moving close to her brother's shoulder as she seemed content to listen to him breathe.

When she woke Will had just eaten food brought to him without question by Katz, who squeezed his shoulder and said, "You should get some rest in a proper bed, Fancy."

Will shook his head and she'd left, Will asking after a portion for Mischa which lured her out of sleep easily.

"You are awake at last," Will said with a sigh, trying to smile, "I was worried."

She sat up and frowned at him, "You have been here all night?"

"And half the day, same as you."

Mischa swallowed, standing to go towards the food before halting just in front of it. "This is for me?"

"Who else would it be for? Him?"

Mischa turned away, eating in silence as Will squeezed Hannibal's hand once more.

"His color is getting better," he observed, wishing to reach up and touch Hannibal's cheek but refraining just barely.

Mischa still was quiet and Will noticed the hard set of her shoulders, frowning. "You are angry with me."

She slammed the plate down with a hard clang, rounding on him and hissing, "You were quite keen to ignore me not days ago, sir, I find it strange that now..."

Will let go of Hannibal's hand, walking towards her slowly, "Little one...."

Mischa's lip quivered as she said, "Do not call me that. I know you think me a monster..."

Will shook his head and rushed to her, stopping just short of touching. “No, I...I thought,” he closed his eyes and took a breath before opening them again, “I thought that ignoring you both would make it easier to leave.”

Mischa’s eyes narrowed, “After you threw yourself at Brown, my brother drank himself quite well into a mess you know? I,” she took a breath, “I thought him an idiot but even I felt betrayed.”

Will swallowed, “Brown threw himself at me, I swear it on my wife and child’s grave.”

Mischa relaxed, “He fights so hard to protect you from him,” she sighed, “I...”

Will came to her then, his arms at her shoulders as he squeezed. “I do not need protection from anyone.”

Mischa smiled, her eyes misted, “You killed our monster.”

Will leaned in and kissed her forehead. “I would do it again quite handily, and every monster hereafter.”

He felt her hands came at his back and embraced her.

“I am happy to wake up to this sight.”

Both of them turned and saw Hannibal watching with a tired smile, Mischa breaking from Will to rush over and toss herself across her brother’s chest. Will winced as he saw the pain in Hannibal’s eyes, though he did not ask her to stop.

“We thought you dead.”

“As did I,” Hannibal said softly, never taking his eyes off of Will, “You have not changed clothes.”

Will looked down at his blood soaked shirt, then back at Hannibal. “No, my mind worried for other things.”

Hannibal’s gaze was the warmest Will had ever seen it yet, the one eye he showed making Will ache to mirror Mischa’s current position.

“You wear the blood well,” Hannibal observed, something in his eyes suddenly making Will dread his next words, “Mischa, can you let Will and I speak alone for a moment?”

Mischa lifted her head and looked between the two of them. “Brolis, please don’t...”

Hannibal reached out and patted her head as if she were still a child, “Please, mazasis. Just a moment.”

She sat up and nodded, still looking quite worried as she left. Will did not move from where he stood far from the bed.

“Before you begin, I did not bed Matthew Brown,” Will said thickly, “Mischa said you were sure of it and I wished to inform you otherwise.”

He saw surprise and delight in Hannibal’s eye, “I see. I would not have blamed you if you did, I have no claims over you.”

The words were like ice in Will's veins, making him come towards the bed.

"You do not?"

Hannibal looked away, "I may have once, but I do not think..."

Will rushed in his movement, standing stock still at Hannibal's bedside as he felt his resolve crumbling. "Do not do this, mylimasis. Do not push me away again."

Hannibal reached out and took Will's hand, staring at their joined hands.

"I never pushed you forward."

Will shook his head, "You told me you thought me beautiful."

"I always have," Hannibal whispered, squeezing their hands together tightly, "I wish to keep you beautiful still and that is why I must ask you to leave."

Will tried to wrench his hand away and Hannibal held on, pulling him close.

"You want me to leave but refuse to allow it?"

Hannibal brought Will's hand to his lips, kissing the knuckle. "It is harder to let you go then I expected, I apologize," he looked at Will and a tear slid down his cheek, "As valiant as you fought and as much as you've learned, I cannot allow you to be sullied by this life or killed doing it. I cannot."

Will leaned in and knelt in front of him, hissing, "I need no one's protection! I killed your monster with ease and I would kill a thousand more to protect you both! I..."

Hannibal kissed him then, a bruising punish of a kiss that had Will sob into his mouth as they parted. "That is why you must go," Hannibal whispered, pressing their foreheads together, "And take Mischa with you."

Will pulled away then, violently, shaking his head as he fought, "I will not do that to her, and you cannot make me do such a crime. She needs you as much as you need her."

"Will."

Will backed up, wiping at his cheeks, "You can push me away, punish me for existing, but I will not let Mischa lose her brother twice."

Hannibal let out a breath, closing his eye. "I only wish for you both to be protected."

"Then protect her life with yours, as I will no longer be here," Will whispered, turning to leave and barely able to do it as he closed the distance to the door.

"Beloved," Hannibal said, making Will close his eyes, "I..."

Will looked at him angrily, "I will not stay where I am not wanted, nor will I let myself be a fool any longer hoping. Goodbye, Captain."

He opened the door and saw Mischa knelt outside of it, her eyes widening as she saw his face. "Will." Will embraced her without words, kissing her cheek and feeling the shake of worry against him. "Will, no."

He found himself unable to speak, squeezing Mischa once more before departing towards the deck.

The crew was still washing off the remains of the massacre the night before, Will observing a mess of bodies that were soon to be tossed into the sea. He was not at all surprised to see Brown atop one such heap, a hole in his chest with eyes dead and unseeing.

"He was never much of a fighter," Francis said to Will's left, making him turn.

Will sighed, "I...when do we reach the next port?"

He saw surprise in the other man's gaze. "I can turn us towards the Row in a few hours time, I was told that we were to bring you home."

Will wiped at his eyes and shook his head, "No, I will just need the shore. I can find my own way home."

A nod from Francis and Will headed down towards his own quiet quarters, stopping short when he saw both Alana and Beverly start to head his way. He took a deep breath and said, half smiling, "I guess this is goodbye."

Both women's eyes widened and Alana grabbed his arm, "Will..."

He nodded, feigning a bigger smile, "It's fine, I'm quite fine."

"Fancy, you look less than fine," Beverly said, her hand coming to his back, "You can't leave. You..."

Will suddenly hugged her, unable to listen to words any longer and felt her stiffen against him but still held on. "I have to."

She nodded against his cheek, kissing it.

"You would have made quite the pirate," she praised, hugging him back just as tightly as he did her.

Will could not say a word and let go, looking to Alana whose eyes were full of anger.

"He is a fool to let you go."

Will smiled, shaking his head. "No, I would be a fool to continue this. I'm not the man I used to be and neither is he."

Alana reached out her hand and touched Will's cheek. "You are stronger than he realizes, and as little as I know about your shared past even I can see the love in both your eyes when you look at each other. I beg you, Fancy, do not let him push you away."

Will stepped back, wiping at his eyes. "I have to."

Both women said nothing as Will headed away from them, and he went back to his bed falling asleep quite easily as soon as the mattress was beneath him.

He woke to someone shaking his shoulder, a quiet whisper of, “We have reached port,” coming from Francis who Will smiled at.

“Thank you.”

“No one else would come to tell you,” Francis explained, “The crew does not wish you to leave.”

Will joked, “I am lucky that you do then,” standing in a stretch.

“I do not wish you to leave either, but I know forcing someone to endure something they do not want for too long is only torture in the end.”

Will nodded, touching the other man’s shoulder. “Thank you.”

He left not looking at anyone, unable to speak, and when his feet hit the ground again Will could not suppress the tears that overtook him.

He did not once look back.

Chapter 9

Hannibal had never felt worse in his entire life.

His body was aching from head to toe, the progress quicker than he had expected over the past weeks but it was not the pain that bothered him.

Will's absence was a like a hole, always on the outer edge of his vision and while he had expected as much the reminders not the worst of it.

Everyone on his crew seemed to despise him.

He could not get help to save his life, it seemed, and his shaky gait was ignored as he tried to make way across the deck. His sister was the worst of them, not even speaking unless spoken to and Hannibal almost wished she had gone with Will but knew the loss would have been much worse if she had.

It had been nearly three weeks since Will had left the ship, his room was still exactly as he'd left it. Hannibal had been down there more than he should have been with his nose pressed into Will's threadbare pillow to take the last of his scent before it faded away.

They were headed towards open sea, looking to head across for another large trade from the goods smuggled away from Mason's ship. Alana had decided on their destination without him. He didn't dare say otherwise for her wrath was softening against him though the anger was still there.

"Captain," Alana's voice was welcome as he stood staring into the back window of his quarters.

"We are nearly there," Hannibal observed, hating the pain that still lingered even now being in his room.

"Yes. I...I would like permission to speak."

He turned, frowning at her. "I have never said you could not."

Alana's eyes narrowed, "Since you seem to think you are the captain of the lives of others, it was assumed speaking freely to be prohibited."

Hannibal looked away, his jaw tensing. "This is about Will."

"Everything is about Will," she snapped, Hannibal still unmoving, "He was left in the middle of nowhere, who knows if..."

"He has contacts, many of them, and he wished as such."

"After you turned him away."

"I did what was best."

He heard her foot stomp down loudly, turning to see the fury in her eyes. "You did what was safest for you! What was easiest for you! You...your sister spends her evenings in between me and my Beverly weeping for the loss, did you know?"

Hannibal looked down. “No, I was not aware.”

“And she thinks it is her fault, that...somehow if she had protected you then Will would still be among us.”

Hannibal’s head shot up, “Mischa is not at fault, I did what I did to protect her. That monster...”

Alana’s eyes softened. “I am aware of what a monster Mason Verger was. I wish,” she sighed, “I wish you had confided in me of him. I wish...I wish I knew more of you and Will.”

Hannibal closed his eye to her, “That is not yours to know.”

“Mischa said you were in love with him at first sight. That...there is no other for you.”

He turned away, staring again out the window. “Why are you speaking of this?”

“We will be nearing Will’s port within the evening.”

Hannibal turned, glaring in fury. “I was not aware our destination had changed. The course...”

She smiled. “Is always changing. Just as the future is never set, and we can change it if we just take a leap of faith.”

He felt his legs shaking under him, a tear threatening to fall. “He will not see me. Not again.”

“He did not wish to leave.”

Hannibal saw her coming closer and did not move away, feeling a steady hand on his arm.

“You are the best of my friends, Bloom.”

She laughed, “I am your only friend, captain,” she looked beyond her, “Save for two others.”

Hannibal looked up and saw Mischa standing at the doorway, her eyes a mess of redness that made him whisper, “Mazasis.”

Alana left them alone, patting Mischa’s shoulder as she went past and closing the door.

“Does this mean you no longer despise the sound of my voice?”

Mischa kept her mouth a thin line as she asked, “Are you still going to be a hopeless fool?”

Hannibal let out a breath and removed his patch, hand over his eyes completely as he let it fall to the floor. “I will be, but not about getting Will back where he belongs,” he looked at her both with both eyes exposed, the other a mess of white that he could barely see through.

She ran to him, her arms tight around as she held on just tightly enough not to hurt.

“Brolis, I hated hating you. I...”

He kissed the top of her head, petting the back of her hair as he spoke, “I deserved every murderous thought in your beautiful head, little one. As I still do until I make this right.”

Mischa smiled up at him. “Are you certain you do not wish me to go?”

“I must do this alone, Mischa, as I have made the mistakes not you.”

Hannibal was sad to let her go, heading for his closet and throwing open the door to the mess that was his clothing. He turned to her with a smile, “I will need you for one thing, though, dear sister.”

Mischa smiled, “What?”

“Help me pick out what to wear for this, I have not been among the royals for nearly a decade and do not wish to embarrass myself.”

Mischa laughed and they headed into his closet, ready to present him as the changed man he should have been so many years ago.

Hours later as the ship pulled into port, Hannibal stood regally with his leg up on the edge of Bella’s Pearl staring into Wolf Trap and feeling memories return the night he had left it behind.

His sister’s red eyes were still the same now, though she smiled at this very moment instead of begging him not to make them leave behind the only home she’d ever known.

He still felt like the young buck who had been made to think he was worthless among a town of regal opulence, but at least he was dressed much finer than the man who had left the decade before.

The attire Mischa had forced him to wear was quite noticeable, darkened maroon all over and his hat would definitely attract attention for the style of it: a feather and a curl on the end.

“You look dashing,” Mischa said for what had to be nearly ten times already.

“As you have said,” he sighed, feeling his heart beat wildly in his chest.

Alana and much of his crew was staring as he took one step off, the notice of the people milling about immediate.

“Do not come back until you have won him over,” Katz said, making him turn with a smirk.

“That could take time.”

Alana threw a hand over her love’s shoulder, “We can wait.”

Hannibal took another breath and headed down, the first step on land making him that much more nerved.

He would not stop until he’d made up for his mistakes.

Not if it took another decade.

Chapter 10

Will had never felt more alone in his entire life.

The first week after leaving Bella's Pearl he did not make a move to contact anyone, and spent most evenings alone trying to think of another avenue to take now that his path was wide open again.

He slept in cheap inns, mostly on credit of his father who would surely learn of his arrival because of it but he no longer cared much about anything.

His father arrived a week to the day he returned and Will greeted him with a punch in the jaw.

The old man did nothing to stop him, turning his cheek on the impact and ignoring the gasps of the bar patrons who frequented the establishment Will was currently taking respite above.

"It is nice to see you alive, son, and in such strength too," the old man joked, chuckling as several eyes turned their way, "My boy and I share a..."

"...hated relationship through backstabbing and equal attempts at you controlling my life."

There was not a denial, Will observed, and when the old man sat down beside him the first thing he said was, "I learned of your ship's demise not long after you'd gone off," he sighed, "I was quite worried."

Will took a sip of his drink, smirking, "That is why you sent no one after me," no denial, again, and Will laughed, "Nice to know I'm worth only the babies I can make."

"Will, how did you get rescued? I had heard such strange rumors."

Will finished his drink and let the glass hit the bar loudly as he said, "I ran into an old friend. You may remember him," his eyes narrowed as he turned to glare, "Hannibal Lecter."

His father's eyes widened, "Will, whatever he said was..."

Will laughed again, "The truth? That you stole my happiness for what, a title? Do you honestly think I would believe you over him?"

His father glared. "That man has never been worth your attentions and I cannot believe you would believe him over your own flesh and blood."

Will got up off his stool, "He's a pirate now, father. Did you know? I let a pirate stick himself inside of me how many times right under your..." Will grabbed onto the hand he moved to strike him, growling, "DO NOT TOUCH ME."

He stepped back, dusting off his clothes. "I was also given money to spare from him, against my will of course, but...he does not want me anymore so you can be quite happy for that."

Will started to leave, feeling like he could fall apart at any moment.

"Will, I did what was best."

Will rounded on him and shouted, "You did what was BEST!? You did what was best for YOU. NOT ME. Do not EVER call yourself my father, ever again. Good day, sir."

He turned and left in a loud stomp, heading for his father's carriage and nodding to the man he recognized, "Hello, Peter."

The man smiled at him, "Will! You...", he frowned, "Look angry."

"Can you take me home, Peter? To my home?"

Peter looked back at the bar, no doubt his father now heading for them, "But your father..."

Will hopped up inside and said, "Will not be accompanying us."

He was happy when Peter did not argue, the carriage moving quickly away.

There was no need to look back again and he was happy for the separation.

His home was darkened on his arrival, but he walked right to the doors and was immediately let inside by the caretaker, Brian, who looked surprised to see him.

"Sir? I was certain you were dead," he put his hands on Will's shoulders and looked at the carriage that was leaving, "Your father..."

Will patted his shoulder, "Will no longer be allowed inside my home, Brian. Thank you for taking care of it in my absence."

Brian nodded and Will went inside, feeling quite weary and hating these quiet halls for the memories that they carried of Molly.

He headed up for his bed, happy to see it neatly made as always and hoped that his maid Abigail was getting along just as well as she had been before he left.

Will lay down face first on the bed, sighing loudly as he tried not to let his emotions wreak havoc through him with thoughts of Hannibal Lecter.

He slept the next day almost straight through, awaking to a hearty breakfast and newly appointed staff thanks to Brian's eagerness to please.

The next week went by in a daze, Will mostly reading through his old library and wishing that he could get back the books he'd taken on the journey to the States but happy he'd kept his home with the idea of a place to dwell when visiting his father.

The idea was non-existent now as the man was less his father and more of an enemy than anything else.

Abigail brought him the mail at week's end and he noticed an invitation with surprise.

Fredericka Lounds was having a ball, and he was invited to attend.

Will hated her, always had, but he and Molly had always enjoyed going to the Lounds parties to make fun of the masses.

The idea was appealing, something to take him out of his melancholy and thinking of nothing for a moment but regality and food.

“Respond with a yes,” he said to Abigail, whose smile widened.

“You are going? I would’ve...you have not seemed up to balls lately, sir?”

Will smiled, “I need to not think for a bit, and I could always use new attire now that I’ve lost most of my favorites to sea.”

Abigail’s smile widened more as she declared excitedly, “I will inform the tailor immediately!”

He was happy to make her day, at least that was something to look forward to in a little over a week’s time.

The tailor came that afternoon, a stout man named Franklyn who seemed equally as surprised to see Will alive as everyone else.

“Earl, I am so happy to know you’re safe,” he said, rushing to greet with an enthusiastic handshake.

Will smiled, “Thank you, Franklyn, I am happy to be safe. Now what ideas do you have for me?”

They spent the afternoon going through fabrics and different styles. Will always liked to dress down but his father insisted on being showy, so they went somewhere in between. A blue color, Franklyn said would compliment his eyes, so Will acquiesced to it despite the brightness seeming too much to him.

It would be done post haste, the tailor promised, and spent the remainder of the next hour measuring Will quite closely though he hardly noticed.

The thought of going to the ball was a good distraction, though Will still felt a tugging at his chest at the thought of Hannibal and Mischa out to sea possibly in some sort of danger he could not be there to protect them from.

But that was no longer his place to think of such things, though he hoped Mischa would come visit if they were ever in the area.

He thought maybe she might.

The following week’s wait for the ball and his finished finery was spent in attendance of his finances, which apparently his father had attempted to acquire before his arrival alive and well. He was happy for Brian’s protection, as the man had fought tooth and nail to keep that from happening.

Will’s wishes upon his death had been to use his fortune for charitable endeavors, which still was the case even now. He felt no need to marry again nor have children, and he would try to use his time on earth for something better than perpetuating his father’s wishes.

The ball neared closer and closer, though the arrival of his attire was still delayed and when it did arrive Will had only twenty four hours to be sure it fit correctly.

His hair had grown longer in the interim between his time away and his time mourning the loss of his life at sea so he tied it back when he tried it on.

“Wow,” he said, staring in the mirror as Brian helped him, “This is...”

“Just what you asked for,” Brian said, dusting off and fixing the clothes, “A fresh start.”

The outfit was finer than any Will had ever owned before though it had cost less than most of his others. He could see every line in his body contoured into it, and felt a blush at his cheeks noticing such.

“Franklyn paid a bit too much attention to detail, I think.”

Brian chuckled, “He fancies you, sir, as do most around here,” he frowned, “Though I take it they will have to continue fancying from afar?”

Will felt a tug at his chest at the word, fancy, and nodded, “I have no need of marriage now, Brian, nor do I have need of a lover.”

The man eyed him oddly, “You have not spoken of your time away,” he knelt at Will’s feet, “Though I have heard you whisper a familiar name in your sleep. A name I have not heard in a while.”

Will’s cheeks reddened, “Brian, please.”

Brian was his steward, his friend, and someone Will would have felt safe to confide in if the pain did not hurt so much. He was happy when Brian nodded, standing and smiling as he winked. “I also heard of the outburst with your father.”

Will sighed, “Brian.”

“Whatever happens from now on, sir, please know you can confide in me.”

Will nodded and was left alone to stare at himself in the mirrors surrounding him.

He felt like an imposter in these clothes, the opulence of it did not seem as comfortable as before his sea journey home.

He stepped out of his clothes again, not wishing to have Brian’s prying eyes or words with him even for a moment.

Will felt comfortable once again in his plain clothes, wishing still he could be wearing even more plain ones and chastising himself for thinking of Bella’s Pearl again.

When he went to bed that night he did something he had not done since his arrival home, or in several years before that.

At the back of his closet sat an indiscriminate box labeled HOME and inside was a shirt that had not been worn in many years. He brought it to his face and inhaled a long forgotten smell, his eyes tearing as he contemplated burning it. His hands shook and he looked down into the box at the stack of letters long fading.

The best choice would be to burn everything straight through, he knew that plainly, but the pain of forgetting completely was too much to bear thinking about.

Instead he put them both back inside and closed the lid, his hand over the top as he felt tears again.

“Damn you,” he whispered, leaving the closet completely and wishing he were a stronger man.

His sleep was fitful that night, his nerves even more so the rest of the next morning, and as he headed to his carriage that following evening he nearly decided not to go at all.

There was no need of this, not really, and he should just stay home deciding on his future but Brian saw the look in his eyes shaking his head as Will nearly turned to head back inside. “Will, do not run away from the world. Just this once, let yourself enjoy.”

Will could not deny the appeal and stepped into the carriage with shaking legs, staring out into the night as they passed by house after house before stopping in front of the Lounds estate.

Monsieur Lounds was not a duke or any sort of royalty but he had more money than most and that made him quite like royalty among them. Will had always liked Fredericka’s father, the man seemed equally as stubborn as his daughter but hated most people as Will did.

“Will!” the Monsieur said, clapping him on the back and into a hug, “I am so happy for your safe passage!”

Will laughed, “Thank you, sir.”

The older man chuckled, “I hope you do enjoy the party, my boy, I am quite happy for the guest list. Did you know I invited a special guest that is going to shock everyone?”

Will frowned as he stepped back, “No, I...why is this guest so shocking?”

The Monsieur laughed, “Because he is a pirate, of course!”

Will’s heart sped faster in his chest as the older man suddenly said, “Ah, there he is now!”

Will turned around so quickly he almost fell, his eyes widening as he took in the newest arrival to the party.

Hannibal had never looked so handsome, not in any moment he had seen him, and Will nearly burst from shock at the sight of his smile.

Their eyes met and Will wanted to throw himself into Hannibal’s arms, his legs quickly making it harder to stand the less space there was between them.

“Will, this is...”

“Hannibal,” Will said, letting out a breath, “We have met.”

Hannibal took Will’s hand and brought it to his lips, his eye never once looking away, “That we have.”

The Monsieur gasped, “Have you? I was not aware! Hannibal, you did not tell me you were acquainted with Will.”

Hannibal’s eye twinkled as he looked from Will to the Monsieur. “I thought best for it to be a surprise,” he did not let go of Will’s hand and the music started up so quickly Will almost wondered if Hannibal had planned it so.

“Would you care to dance?”

Will swallowed and said, “I was not aware you still could.”

Hannibal’s toothy grin made Will wish to kiss it off his mouth. “We shall see, won’t we?”

Chapter 11

They dance before even really talking, the ease of it bringing up more than memories for them both as they glide between the other dancers on the floor.

Will almost doesn't want to ask, to know, but does anyway.

"What are you doing here?"

A smirk and he is turned, stepped closer to as Hannibal catches him close. "I came to retrieve something you took from me when you left."

Will frowned as they moved, trying to think if he'd even taken a single thing before stepping off the ship. "I do not remember taking a single thing with me other than the clothes and they were not very good quality, so I did not believe them to be yours."

Hannibal turned them again and Will was surprised at how easily he remembered being led when he had never danced with another man after Hannibal's death. He was turned and then dipped rather indecently, the press of the pirate's chest to his own making Will lose breath just as Hannibal spoke.

"You smell perfumed."

Will blushed as they came back up, his voice thick as he confessed, "I am not."

Hannibal smiled and moved them again, Will fighting to keep his mind clear as he remembered, "You did not answer my question."

Hannibal seemed almost ready to laugh as he teased, "I was not aware you gave one, Earl."

Will glared, "What is it I have stolen that was so important you turned the ship around completely to retrieve it?"

Hannibal pulled him close again; their faces so close Will could feel breath against his cheek. "My heart."

Will's chest hurt at the confession, a tease no doubt and he almost pulled away from his partner completely but Hannibal held on.

"Do not jest with me," he spat, eyes wild, "Not here."

"Mylimasis, I have never been more truthful."

Will was shaking in his hold, the music still playing as they started to dance again more wildly as Will attempted to flee but was trapped each time in arms he could not fight.

"You told me to leave," he whispered, lips coming close to Hannibal's ear, "You said..."

"I was a fool," Hannibal's purr made Will nearly moan, biting his lip instead.

Will broke off from him then, his face a mess of emotion as he made his way through the first set of open balcony doors, continuing on through to the garden maze at the back until he was alone again breathing in the cold air.

He sat down on the first bench he came across and put his hands across his face, feeling tears overwhelm him again.

“Will...”

“You cannot do this. Not again.”

“If you wish for me to leave...”

Will jumped up and rounded on Hannibal again as he hissed, “You keep doing this to me and I cannot take it much longer,” he swallowed back a curse, “You do not want me, you want me, you do not want me, and now you want me again. I do not know whether to kiss you or throttle you!”

Hannibal did not move and Will’s chest was heaving as they stared each other down.

“I would let you do either, Beloved, and gladly take the beating.”

Will sighed, “You cannot use that word against me.”

“Will...” Hannibal stepped forward and Will put out his hand.

“No. Stay right where you are. I cannot think correctly when you are close, you know that, and it’s not fair to me for you to use such things,” Hannibal stepped forward again and Will backed up, shaking his head. “Please, just...”

The kiss was desperate, Will could feel Hannibal shaking against his cheek and he bit into the other man’s lip as Hannibal still pressed on, his hand coming to Will’s neck to deepen their connection. Will moaned, throwing himself back and pushing him away.

“I cannot believe,” Will’s voice was thick, “You would stoop to such.”

“Will, please.”

“Please?” Will said loudly, laughing, “You have torn me to pieces since we met again, you...”

Hannibal suddenly knelt at his feet, his hands coming to Will’s shoes.

Will stared, mesmerized at the sight.

Hannibal’s head was bowed as he spoke, “I will do anything in my power to make up for my past mistakes and not let a single thing come between us again,” he lifted his head as he took Will’s hand and kissed it, lips lingering, “This is my vow to you, here and now, Earl of Duke Hall.”

“Hannibal, stand up.”

“No, not until you allow me an opportunity to make amends to you, even if in the end it’s all for naught.”

Will sighed, “Please, just...”

He looked up at Will and took off his eyepatch, placing the patch in Will's hand as he said, "I am prostrating myself at your feet, humiliating myself..."

Will took in the sight of his white irised eye, wondering what had caused the injury but biting back his questions instead demanding, "Stand up this instant."

Hannibal grabbed onto Will's feet as he tried to move, pressing himself down in a bow again.

"I will not let you go easily, Will."

Will's voice shook when he whispered, "You did the first time."

Hannibal's head shot up so quickly that Will had an opportunity to escape, nearly running as he was tackled to the garden floor.

Hannibal was hovering above him, breath heavy as he said, "I did no such thing."

Will whispered, "You left me, thinking you dead, and I mourned. Hannibal I wanted to die with you, I did. I died with you that first time, my heart was broken," Will closed his eyes and sobbed out, "I..."

Hannibal reached out to touch his cheek, "I will never be able to make up for that, I know Will. I know."

Will opened his eyes again, barely able to see for his tears. "Then why would you send me away?"

Hannibal pressed a kiss to Will's hand, "Because I could not bear having to see you killed in front of me, to lose you in that way," he pressed his cheek again to Will's palm, "I could not. I will not."

Will's caress made him moan, closing his eyes.

"Then fight to protect me as I did you, if that happens. I...teach me to fight so well that no one will be able to strike me down."

Hannibal's eyes opened and he smiled, kissing Will's palm. "Beloved."

"I cannot believe we are lying in the grass this way, it," Will laughed and swallowed back a sob, "It reminds me of the first time you kissed me."

Hannibal paused, "As I recall, you were the one who kissed me."

Will scoffed, "You picked a fight with me, because of your jealousy, and then would not let me even near Helena Breckinridge when my father..."

Hannibal suddenly leaned in close to Will, their mouths inches apart as he whispered, "She wished for you to kiss her," he moved closer still barely touching, "And you would have let her."

"No, I would not. I," Will shivered, "Hannibal, please."

The kiss they shared now was slow and purposeful, an exploration and declaration of renewal between them. Will moaned, pulling hard on Hannibal's hair as the kiss grew more frenzied, huffing for breath when they parted.

“You can never leave me again,” Will demanded, kissing Hannibal’s lips and up to his cheek, “Never again. I will not let you.”

“They would have to drag me away in chains, Will,” Hannibal’s lips were over Will’s eyelids, tasting his tears, “No one will separate us again. No one.”

Will’s arms came around him tightly as he rolled them over, Hannibal gasping as Will lay over him. He kissed Hannibal’s cheek again, up to his eye and whispered, “As tave myliu, Mylimasis,” over and over again as Hannibal moaned pulling him closer still.

Will pressed a kiss over Hannibal’s eyelid, his lips shaking as Hannibal whispered, “I love you, Beloved. I have never once stopped.”

The hand at his back made Will feel safer than he had in so very long, pressing his cheek to Hannibal’s own as he said, “We cannot do this here.”

Hannibal kissed his cheek. “Who says we cannot?”

“I do,” Will sighed, pulling away just enough to smile down at him, “I will not bed down with you in the grass of someone else’s estate.”

Hannibal kissed him quick, breathing in as he spoke, “Does that mean you will allow us to bed down in the grass of your own?”

Will laughed and stood up, staring down and around his ruined attire. “Franklyn is going to kill me.”

Hannibal growled even before he stood, pulling Will close to him again as he declared, “I will strike him down first.”

Will smiled, “He is my tailor,” he looked down at Hannibal’s clothing and then noticed the eyepatch lying on the ground where they’d fallen reaching down to retrieve it, “Here.”

He handed it to Hannibal who said, “It is yours, I have no need of it.”

Will stared at the patch before putting it into his pocket, holding out his hand for Hannibal to take in his. “Shall we?”

Hannibal kissed him again, unable to help himself. “Lead the way.”

There was a wrought iron gate at the front of the yard that Hannibal opened for Will and gestured for him to go through as he followed. The carriages were all waiting for their masters as Will easily found his own, Brian at the helm seemingly asleep. He coughed.

“It is time to depart.”

Brian suddenly shot up, nearly falling as he said, “Sir, it is quite early is it...” he paused, his eyes wide, “Hannibal?”

His smile was wide as he hopped down off the carriage, rushing up to hug Hannibal who seemed to wish not to let go of Will’s hand but had to once Brian pulled him in so tightly.

“Brian, you have grown.”

“I cannot believe it is you! I...” he looked at Will’s ruined clothing, and Hannibal’s own before his face reddened, “I...I see. Well I think we best be off. I assume you are following us, Hannibal?”

Will grinned, “We are giving him a ride,” he opened the carriage, “And a tour of the house.”

Hannibal winked at Will as he held the door, Will stepping up as he followed. Once the door closed and they were off he was on Will again, pulling Will over and into his lap for a kiss that had them both groaning. “Will, please.”

“Not until we have a bed,” Will panted, kissing him again as even he fought his wanton feelings, “We...we cannot.”

Hannibal’s hand came to the front of his pants, stroking against the silk fabric and making him moan, “You have grown, Will,” he teased, mouth kissing down Will’s neck, “I can feel you growing even more.”

“You do not play fair, sir, I...” Will panted into a moan, “I can’t, I, oh please.”

Hannibal sped up his movements and Will’s hands shook as he attempted to expose his cock for Hannibal to touch. “Will, do not tease me.”

“Me, tease you? Who is touching who in such...indecent ways?”

His hand tore at the pants hiding Will from his touch and they both gasped at the first contact between them again. “Oh, you have grown,” he praised, kissing Will’s lips again, “I remember.”

Will was panting against his cheek, moaning so prettily that Hannibal’s cock was straining to be freed as well but with Will so close he could not, instead just bucking up into Will’s knee. “Will, please.”

The coach stopped and they both groaned in their dissatisfaction at no time for completion, Will kissing his cheek as he righted himself as best he could. “That is why I wished for a bed.”

Hannibal growled, “If Brian were not a friend, I would slit his throat.”

Will laughed, “Lucky for him then.”

Brian opened the door and turned even redder at seeing the disarray of their clothes, looking down as he said, “We have arrived.”

Hannibal stepped out first and held out his hand for Will, who pulled down his shirt to block the ripped opening to his pants as they headed inside.

The other staff were all watching them both with wide eyes as Will yanked on Hannibal’s hand as they ran up the stairs and into his room.

Hannibal paused as they stood inside, taking in the room with interested eyes.

“This does not seem like a room you would own.”

Will growled, pulling him in close. “Who cares? You need to be rid of more clothing.”

Hannibal's eyes darkened as Will stripped, coat going first followed by the expensive shirt, which exposed his entire top half to Hannibal's viewing. He blushed, suddenly self-conscious that they had not seen each other naked in nearly a decade.

"I am not very muscular, as I have..."

Hannibal's eyes narrowed, "Do not stop until I have seen it all."

Will swallowed, licking his lips, "I believe I should be allowed the same gesture."

Hannibal quickly did the same, though he took off his shoes as well, waiting for Will to continue. Will dropped his pants and underwear without thought stepping and kicking the mess over to the side. He climbed onto the bed and lay down, staring with hungry eyes at Hannibal.

"Your turn, I believe?"

Hannibal's strained hardness was evident even from the bottom of the bed, his slow removal making Will impatient for the reveal even as little by little he saw it all. The finished exposing of Hannibal to him completely made Will bite his lip as he watched the pirate stalk over to the bed and stop before climbing on.

"You have everything?"

Will swallowed, his cheeks flushed as he said hoarsely, "I...I think they are in the closet."

Hannibal knelt down and kissed him deeply, the taste of him making Will's cock desperate for attention and he moaned as Hannibal pulled away. "Stay there."

Will laughed, "Where else would I go?"

Will got up and stripped the bed, nearly bouncing in his excitement before he lay back down again. He sighed, still smiling as he said, "What is taking you so long?"

He groaned, rolling over and standing as he headed towards the closet walking back towards where Hannibal had his back to him. "What are you...?"

Will froze at seeing an all too familiar shirt in Hannibal's hand. "You were not supposed to see that."

Hannibal's eyes were misted over as he spoke, "Will, how can you even think to forgive me?"

Will took the shirt from him and tossed it aside, grabbing Hannibal close and embracing him tightly. "Because you are here now, and you promised me. You never break promises, remember?"

Hannibal's grip tightened, his lips pressed to Will's temple as he spoke, "I have never promised you anything before."

Will laughed, stepping back as he said, "You promised we would be together forever, do you not remember?" he kissed Hannibal softly, hand to Hannibal's cheek, "And now you said you would never leave again."

"Will," Hannibal sighed, pressing his lips to Will's mouth again, "My Will."

“Yours,” Will echoed, putting Hannibal’s hand on his cock, “Now make me remember what that feels like.”

Hannibal growled, grabbing for the oil he’d set down and dragging Will back through the closet doors, throwing him down on the bed. “On your belly.”

Will did as he was told, staring at him as Hannibal moved around the bed and below him to grab Will’s hips and pull him down so his opening was hanging exposed on the edge of the bed.

“Hannibal....”

“I wish to taste,” he whispered, pressing his lips across Will’s cheek and then down in between them both, licking out to taste as Will moaned.

“Hannibal, oh please,” Will bit his tongue to keep from crying out as he felt the warmth of Hannibal’s tongue inside him.

He was relentless in his assault, tongue thrusting in and out of Will with such speed that Will could not suppress his moans. He begged, “Please, I need...not this, I need...”

Hannibal’s head came up at the word, reaching up to slick his fingers completely with the oil at his side before pressing the first one inside Will.

“So tight for me,” he praised, moving his finger slowly, “Have you been touching yourself here?”

Will moaned, shaking his head as he pressed his hips down into the bed. “No, I...no, I haven’t touched there since you.”

Hannibal’s voice was thick as he spoke, “Will...”

“Open me up again,” Will demanded, turning as best he could to look at Hannibal, “Please.”

Hannibal added another finger as he stroked, touching the perfect place inside Will to make him cry out. “There it is.”

Will laughed, barely able to get out, “Right where you left it.”

Hannibal kissed his cheek again, “Move up on the bed.”

He pulled out his fingers and Will barely was able to move up again, his legs shaking as he tried so Hannibal pulled him the rest of the way. He shivered at the hand going down his back and his eyes were heavy as he said, “I need you,” and Hannibal kissed him softly as he whispered, “As I do you.”

The first press inside was like coming home again, Will’s sob as he clutched onto Hannibal’s side making Hannibal kiss at his neck, “I am here, Beloved, I am here.”

“Hannibal,” Will sobbed, “I need to be closer, pull me closer.”

Hannibal moaned as he lifted Will up into his lap, his hand coming around his beloved’s waist as Will turned to kiss him. He tasted tears and joy on Will’s tongue, moving up slowly and groaning at the feeling.

They moved slowly, the tender coupling was the start to their new beginning as Hannibal's hand moved to stroke Will in time with his thrusts. Will moaned, gasping for breath as he spoke, "More," he kissed Hannibal's chin, "Please, more."

Hannibal lay them down with Will on his side, the slide of his hips quickening as he felt Will tensing and when Will came it was with a cry, sobbing Hannibal's name over and over again as Hannibal did the same not long after, holding on tightly even after they'd reached completion.

He breathed in their combined scent, licking at Will's spent passion from his hand the long forgotten taste quite different on his tongue though he wished for more kissing Will's lips and saying as such.

Will laughed. "I'm not going anywhere, remember?"

Hannibal nodded against his neck, "Yes, I remember."

He pulled out and both of them sighed at the loss, Hannibal rolling Will onto his back so he could lick away the remainder from his Will's hand in his hair as he made sure not to miss a single spot.

When he pulled back he moved to do the same to Will's waiting hole, his beloved's hand stopped him quickly. "I just...let me feel it a bit longer."

Hannibal kissed his shoulder and pressed against him, making certain Will could feel his spent cock nestled against him. "Better?"

"Mmm," Will sighed, his eyes drooping as he spoke, "I do believe you have exhausted me, sir."

Hannibal kissed his neck, "Good."

They both fell asleep nestled against each other, Will content with Hannibal's breath against his cheek and Hannibal's hand pulling him closer still.

Chapter 12

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

The rustling beside him was what woke Hannibal, his eyes barely able to make out Will's form in the darkness as he felt along his beloved's back.

"Will?"

A muffled moan and thrashing from Will, making Hannibal's arms tighten around him as he shook Will in hopes to wake him.

Will gasped out, "Hannibal?" his hand searching in the darkness for Hannibal's own. He kissed the corner of Will's cheek, pressing his own to it as he said, "You were having a nightmare."

Will shook in his arms as he confessed, "I dreamt that I'd woken up to find this all a dream. That," he kissed Hannibal's hand, "You were still buried in the ground and I was alone again."

Hannibal turned Will to him and took Will's hand, placing it on his chest.

"I am here," he promised, pressing Will's hand to his heart, "My heart is beating. Can you feel it?"

Will's hand shook in his. "Yes. I just..."

Hannibal kissed him, a reassurance as Will's breath came in a rush when they parted.

Will ran his fingers lightly in Hannibal's chest hair and he felt a tingle through him at the touch.

"Tell me a story, that I do not know," Will whispered, leaning in to kiss his cheek, "Please."

Hannibal pulled him close again, Will lying with his ear over Hannibal's heart no doubt listening to the beat as best he could. "My eye."

Will mumbled, "What of it?"

"How I received it was less than bravely," he sighed, running his hands through Will's curls, "I was mistakenly thought to have ravished the young daughter of the King."

Will laughed, "You're jesting with me, sir, and I would like to hear the real story."

Hannibal took Will's hand and kissed it. "This is, Beloved, a one hundred percent authentic tale. Jack and I were uninvited guests to a wedding between the king's daughter and a nobleman, and as it was not I that ravished her the duel after was quite a nuisance."

Will pressed his face into Hannibal's chest, his laughter making Hannibal smile.

"You still do not believe me, do you?"

Will lifted his head and leaned over the table, lighting the candle and turning to look at him with a smile as light filled the bedroom. "I believe you," he said, climbing over Hannibal and staring him down. His hand came to Hannibal's white eye, touching the scar beneath it as he said, "It was a gun?"

Hannibal nodded, "The king's guard had a faulty pistol and what killed him ended up deforming me."

Will frowned, "You are not deformed, Hannibal, it's..." he reached across and Hannibal closed his eye, Will's touch making him shiver, "A scar worthy of a pirate king."

Hannibal smiled, opening his eye again as he looked to Will. "Tell me one of you."

Will swallowed, settling himself on Hannibal's chest his weight barely noticeable though his backside touched against Hannibal's quite interested cock. He chose to ignore it, though Will had a twinkle in his eye when he moved down further, teasing as he said, "The stories I have are not as lighthearted as yours."

Hannibal put his hands on Will's hips and squeezed just enough, "Tell me still."

Will sighed, laying back on him again and settling, the blanket rolling off them both completely. "The day I threatened to end my life, and my father told me that I did not have to marry, was the day I first gave myself to someone who was not you."

Hannibal tensed, his hand tightening onto Will's back. "A man?"

Will shook his head, "I went to a brothel and paid for a whore, she was quite nice to me actually and held me when I cried afterward," he lifted his head and smiled at him, "I told you that they were not as fanciful. I did not have a pirate's life."

Hannibal touched across his head, petting Will softly, "Do you wish to?"

Will smiled, moving himself again so he was settled against Hannibal's cock and Hannibal sat up, lifting him into position. He moved in closer and felt Will's breath across his lips. "I quite enjoyed my time on the ship," he bounced in Hannibal's lap, his increased movement making them both gasp, "Even you being so cold to me, I still was happy to share space with you again."

Hannibal growled, leaning them down onto the bed and moving down Will's body with his tongue. He reveled in the arch of his beloved's body with each lick, biting just enough for Will to moan, "Hannibal."

"I will not let you go," he promised, stopping to nuzzle above the thick patch of hair above Will's cock, "Never again."

Will's hands came to his hair, tugging even before the first lick. He moved off and kissed at Will's hardness nuzzling against it. "Hannibal, please."

Hannibal took Will's length in past his lips slowly, caressing Will's sack as he tasted him and when he was fully inside Hannibal's hand came around Will to start stroking as his mouth moved.

Will panted, his hips struggling not to move up into his mouth but Hannibal let his mouth go slack in permission, Will groaning as he started to fuck up into him. The first taste of Will's passion on

his lips made it hard not to touch himself in turn, moving his hand quickly to stroke even as Will whimpered, “No, I...” and crashing into pleasure not long after Will was riding the aftershocks.

Hannibal pulled his mouth up and licked at Will’s spent cock, his throat hoarse as he teased, “I hope that was adequate,” reaching out to wipe away the remainder from his hands.

Will’s hand was across his face and he laughed, legs coming round Hannibal tightly as he settled on him. His face was flushed, mouth wet, and eyes warm as Hannibal stared.

He had never seen him look more beautiful.

“You are a vision,” he praised, Will smiling.

“No, I am not, though many have thought to tell me so I am not so easily won with pretty compliments and shiny baubles.”

Hannibal moved atop him more fully, settling on his elbows as he frowned. “Who has given you baubles?”

Will laughed, “The Duke of Chasmire, for once. More than once the man gave me hideous necklaces during my debut. You do not remember?”

Hannibal tried to remember such an incident, though a sudden thought occurred to him.

“Marjorie Steele,” he said, eyes narrowing, “That little wretch that asked you to the Queen’s court on your birthday and gave you that hideous dog brooch.”

Will touched the hair on his face, “You gave it to Brian, who gave it to Maris Trecott. She thought it was gorgeous, I think she still has it.”

Hannibal laughed, kissing his chin, “I still have something I was expecting to give you, though this talk makes me believe you would not wish for it now.”

Will scoffed, “I would take even the ugliest of gifts from you. I kept Cephie till she passed away, that horrible mutt of a thing.”

Hannibal’s heart ached remembering the puppy he’d given Will shortly before leaving forever. “How long?”

Will sighed, “I think she was nearing seven, she used to sleep most evenings with me.”

Hannibal kissed his lips again, “Do you wish me to give you it then? I have it now.”

Will nodded, “I would like to see this mysterious bauble, yes.”

Hannibal swallowed, standing and enjoying the feel of Will’s gaze on his form. He found his tossed away clothes and Will frowned, “You kept it on your person? After all this time?”

The necklace was not hard to find, he’d stuffed it in his pocket while searching the closet, not sure if the gesture of giving it would scare Will away completely. There was no turning back now.

He lifted the chain, Will’s eyes widening at the sight of what dangled from it.

“I bought it shortly before leaving,” he said, his voice thick, “If you do not wish to...”

Both ring and necklace were snatched from his hand, Will staring at it with watered over eyes as he whispered, “You should have left it, I...if I had this, I do not think I would have ever married.”

Hannibal unclasped the necklace and slid the ring off, Will holding it in his hands as Hannibal asked, “Would you ever consider marrying again?”

Will’s head shot up and he swallowed, “I,” he looked shaken, “Are you asking me a question?”

Hannibal took the ring from him and knelt on the bed, staring at Will. “Would you like me to? Ask?”

Will laughed, “What type of proposal is this, sir? I do not...”

Hannibal kissed Will’s hand when he took it, sliding the ring on his finger as he spoke, “William Graham, would you do me the great honor of becoming my husband?”

Will’s lip quivered as he nodded, hand coming to Hannibal’s chin as they kissed and when he moved back to ask, “When can we go home?”

Hannibal kissed him again and again, breathless with his happiness.

“Whenever you wish to.”

Will smiled, hugging him tightly, “I feel as if I am already there.”

Chapter End Notes

So I apparently numbered chapters wrong and there's 14 instead of 13!

Chapter 13

The sight of Bella's Pearl again made Will smile, taking a deep breath as he stepped on board and nodded once to Francis who seemed to be standing guard.

"Good morning, Captain," he said, a slight smirk as he saw Will, "And Will, it's good to see you've found what you wanted."

Will smiled at him, his hand taking Hannibal's with a grin. "I always knew what I wanted, I was just waiting for someone else to want it too."

Hannibal kissed him, turning Will close as their touch deepened and it took the high pitched yell of, "WILL!" to break them apart as both laughed.

Will looked over and Mischa came at him, throwing her arms around tight as he did the same never taking his eyes off of Hannibal.

"I'm so happy you're here," she mumbled into his neck, kissing his cheek as they parted, "We missed you so much, and I really..."

Will could not help that his eyes never left Hannibal's, the warmth in the look making him wish for a warm bed to share again even after a quick tryst in his forgotten carriage.

He patted Mischa's back and said, "I missed you too, little one, though," he smiled, holding up his hand for her view, "You missed some important developments."

Mischa let out a loud yell as she threw hands over her mouth, launching herself at Hannibal as she laughed and then back at Will soon after.

"THE CAPTAIN IS GETTING MARRIED!" she yelled so loud, Will was sure the whole crew could hear.

Hannibal chuckled and Will came closer to him as she took off no doubt to get Bloom and Katz. "I think the whole of the town heard the development, I'm surprised that they did not call the constable for your capture."

Hannibal's hand came to Will's backside, reigning him in again quickly as he used his other hand to attempt a taming of Will's curls. "They would have to drag me away in chains, as I promised you remember?"

Will smiled, kissing him soundly as he saw several of the crew coming out to cheer their return and good news. He received hugs from both Alana and Beverly, both of whom asked, "How was your evening?" with knowing grins.

"It was," he blushed, "Pleasant."

Both women chuckled and Beverly said, nudging him, "I'll bet."

They broke out into an impromptu party as they pulled away from port, the morning winds making Will close his eyes against the feel of it shivering until Hannibal came at his back in a tight hug.

“You are chilled?”

He shook his head. “No, I’m fine,” he leaned back against Hannibal and they stood staring at the ocean ahead.

“What do you think that they’ll call me?”

Hannibal’s lips came to his neck, “Who are you speaking of?”

Will laughed, “The people. You are Il Mostro, and I will have to be called something. What would they call me? I am no monster, though neither are you, and I do not like the idea of being called Earl as I have given up that life completely. I need to be called something.”

Hannibal turned him then, smiling down at Will knowingly as he took Will’s ring finger to his lips. “They will call you mine, and anyone who does anything else will risk death.”

Will blushed as he smiled, kissing Hannibal softly as someone broke out into song. He pressed his lips to Hannibal’s ear and asked, “Is it rude to retire early from your own engagement party?”

Hannibal took his hand and said, “I am the captain of this ship, Will, no one has an authority over my actions.”

Will grinned, pulling him back towards the door to Hannibal’s quarters on the lower decks, “Except me.”

“Except you,” Hannibal echoed.

They were on each other as soon as the door closed, Will pulling at Hannibal’s shirt and Hannibal nearly ripping his own off in the process as he walked backwards down the stairs. He pushed Hannibal through the door to his room and slammed it behind him, turning the pirate around to press him against the door as he whispered, “I do believe it is my time to taste you.”

Hannibal groaned as Will got on his knees, undoing his pants and mindlessly mumbling in his native speech making Will grin as he exposed his prize.

The first taste brought back memories of their first time, Will’s eagerness and Hannibal’s patience attempting to walk him through the motions. Will licked at him now, hand moving ever so slowly as he recited, “Do not go too slow, just fast enough for me to feel it,” making Hannibal look down at him in surprise.

“Will?”

He lifted his head and felt foolish for feeling teary eyed at memory of such a thing.

“The first time I took your cock, you directed me how to please you. Have your preferences changed?”

Hannibal’s hand came to Will’s hair and he shook his head, “You please me, in all that you do. You please me. Do with that what you will.”

Will felt a tear on his cheek as he went back to his task, taking in enough of Hannibal to make the man above him groan even as his fingers sought Hannibal’s other pleased area to hear his surprise shout at the touch.

“Mylimasis, you...”

Will's nails dug deep into Hannibal's thigh, making him hiss as Will's mouth bobbed up and down his length.

His sharp intakes of breath were the only noise other than the slick slide of Will's movements and when Hannibal succumbed to his passion Will coughed in his attempt to contain it, licking still when his mouth was freed.

“Perfect,” Hannibal sighed, “Just perfect.”

Will wiped at his mouth and grinned. “I will have to relearn how to take it again.”

Hannibal's thumb traced around Will's lips, “I will be an attentive teacher.”

Will laughed and stood up, cock straining as Hannibal pulled him in closer.

“Come, Earl,” Hannibal teased, pulling him towards the bed by his pants, “I will need to relearn how to pleasure you as well.”

Will turned them around and pushed Hannibal down onto the bed, laughing as they rolled and he was just about to free himself when the door opened behind them.

“I knew you'd be in here,” Mischa said, hands on her hips where she stood in the doorway, “Come on, then, you have time and forever to bed each other there is a perfectly good party up on deck in your honor.”

Hannibal growled, “Mazasis, this is...”

“Do not try to reason with me in regards to your cock, Brolis,” she snapped, “Come.”

Both men sighed, Hannibal fixing himself as he mumbled in Lithuanian that Mischa answered back just as rudely while Will attempted to make himself look halfway presentable.

They took three steps on deck and stopped short, seeing a man tied to a post in the middle of the deck floor.

“What is this?” Hannibal snapped, “You said...”

Mischa pulled on his arm, laughing, “Alana and Beverly abducted a preacher just in case you needed one! Isn't that wonderful?”

Will laughed as Hannibal stared at his first mate and her love. “Have you lost all senses? This is not even legal and...”

Will pulled on his arm and kissed his cheek, “I think it's lovely, thank you both,” he narrowed his eyes at Mischa, “You knew of this?”

She shook her head. “Not at all! They were both quite drunk and explained it now. The man has been here for hours waiting, though Brolis,” she looked at Hannibal, “After you had been gone for half a day we all assumed you'd been successful.”

The crew all raised their glasses and cheered, taking another drink as Will pulled Hannibal to the preacher who seemed to get more frightened. He pulled the cover from the man's mouth. "I am so sorry, sir, but we need you to marry us."

The man stared at Hannibal, intimidating and menacing, and then at Will, bright eyed and smiling. "Has he abducted you as well, son? I cannot in good faith..."

Will kissed Hannibal soundly, his pirate grabbing on with both hands as the preacher coughed. "Well then."

The ceremony did not last more than five minutes, two quick I do's and a pronouncement of marriage before Will was officially William Lecter.

"Thank you, sir," Will said before attempting to shake the man's hand before realizing he was tied, instead patting his shoulder.

"Thank you," Hannibal bowed, Will rolling his eyes as he pulled his pirate husband towards the drunken crowd.

They waited another hour before the crew was sufficiently sauced, Hannibal carrying Will over his shoulder as a yell of, "GO GET HIM CAPTAIN!" went up through them.

Will laughed as he was carried down the stairs and tossed onto the bed, his husband staring him down again though with a bit more of a drunken glaze in his eyes.

"You are drunk," he teased, Hannibal biting at his neck.

"Pirates do not get drunk, Will," Hannibal mumbled, undoing his cravat and throwing it over the bed, "I should know as I have been one for quite some..."

He passed out face first on Will's chest, Will petting his head in a sigh as he rolled Hannibal off him. His beloved's face was beautiful at rest, Will thought, kissing his cheek as he readied himself for bed.

He fixed the blankets and readied Hannibal as well, though it was harder to remove his clothes, in time Will did entirely. The candle that lit the room was blown out and Will moved close to him, breathing in the scent of them both.

"I love you," Will whispered, kissing him.

Hannibal kissed back some, though his mumbled, "As tave myliu," made Will grin before laying his head on Hannibal's chest and following him into dreamland.

Though he didn't need to dream anymore, his dreams had finally come true.

Chapter 14

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

EPILOGUE:

Captain Du Maurier stood on deck, breathing in the air as she smiled.

“I do believe today will be the perfect day.”

Dimmond clapped her on the back and laughed, “You say that every time, Captain, and every time it ends up raining. You have no eye for the storm ahead. Not ever in all the years I have...”

She saw her first mate’s eyes widen at the sight behind her, turning to see the great black vessel coming towards them with growing speed.

“He’s come for us,” she hissed, yelling, “Ready the guns! The cannons!”

“Is that...? It cannot be! They were not spotted in these waters! You said that there was no way to...” Dimmond said in a panic, grabbing for his sword.

The first hit of the cannon shook the ship completely and they both nearly fell overboard, holding onto the nearest post there was as another came through. Her men were called to arms and fought hard, weary of the nightmare ahead.

The shots fired seemed to miss every one of their targets, and when the first swing above came with several others, there was nothing to be done.

Il Mostro had found them.

The man in question came on deck after near all the crew save for her and Dimmond were dead, blood on his lips and a smile that frightened Bedelia now that she knew he was no longer here to trade or make merry with her.

“Hello, Bedelia.”

She grabbed for her gun and fired, cursing when the powder seemed to have gone dry.

“Please, I did not expect...”

Dimmond threw himself at Hannibal’s chest, his obnoxious weeping sounding forced even to her. “He threatened us all! He was a monster, Hannibal, he was...!”

The first shot to his shoulder made Anthony curse, snarling as he saw Will step onto the deck with a gun in his hand. “Lies,” he spat, wiping off his mouth and she saw blood smeared the same as Hannibal’s own, “Like we would believe that for a second.”

Hannibal laughed, reaching for Will’s hand and she saw a flash of something on both their hands that gave her pause. “You’ve married.”

She heard Anthony curse and Will leaned up to kiss Hannibal quite lewdly, his hand touching right under his deformed eye in answer before turning to smile. "That we have and we are here to... celebrate."

The yelling growl that erupted from Anthony made her jump in surprise, his attack towards Will and she watched fascinated as Hannibal stepped back to allow it. The Earl easily countered every bite of her first mate's sword ending it in a stab to his throat as he whispered, "Nice try," the body falling to the deck's floor as she felt tears of frustration in her eyes.

"You would have done the same," she countered, hand at her sword, "If it had been you..."

Hannibal stepped forward into her space, his smile surprisingly gentle. "But it was not."

She moved to grab for her sword and Hannibal was faster, his stab quick and clean as she felt the coldness of death overtaking her. He touched her face and she spat out, "Monster," just as Hannibal let her fall over Dimmond's now lifeless body.

The pain came into her so quickly it was hard to fight, her vision blurring as the last thing she saw was a shared kiss between them.



Chapter End Notes

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